











## CONTENTS

9 | Editor's Letter

#### **NEWS**

- **12** | Stongher: Women Ambassadors of Cycling
- 22 | Inaugural L'Etape London by le Tour de France
- **24** The Isle of Wight Cycling Festival



- 15 | Ask Anita
- **16** Bicycle Diaries: 'bummel' through Europe and the Middle East
- **60** Film Review: The Program-the New Armstrong Film
- **64** Book Review: The History of the Modern Bike

#### UK CYCLING WALES IN DEPTH

- **30** I Welcome to Snowdonia
- **34** A Weekend Cycling In... Snowdonia
- **38** Lon Las Cymru: Cross Wales Cycle Route









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#### **BIKES & STUFF**

On the Twelfth Day of Christmas my cyclist got from me...

The Kids Want a Bike | 48 for Christmas

Cycling Games Review | 53

#### **OVERSEAS CYCLING**

The World Press Cycling Championships in Oudenaarde

Cycling the Occupied West Bank for Palestinian Medical **Projects** 



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#### **Editor's letter**

#### December 2015

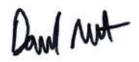


hat does December mean to a cyclist? No work or school means opportunities for family cycling, though without the weather to inspire? Time to go on a cycling trip to warmer climates but family commitments keeping you in the UK? Seasonal eating followed by guilt and calorie burning sessions on the turbo trainer? A month of contradictions it would seem.

Fortunately there is little reason not be out on the bike. UK weather seems to going through a less harsh period and there is a lot of great winter kit and accessories out there. Do change your tyres to something better for winter conditions. Let us not forget a flourishing cylocross season too.

Holiday season is also an opportunity to languish in the evergrowing cycling lifestyle and enjoy the related products. Time to watch one of the many cycling films, read a cycling book or play a cycling game. An opportunity to exchange a quirky cycling gift and give a child the best Christmas present ever – a bicycle. Herein lies a guarantee that someone will be out cycling whatever the weather. We hope our December edition gives you some inspiration and ideas to ensure that the bicycle features somewhere in your festive and holiday season.

Seasonal greetings to all our readers.



David Robert (Editor)

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# NEWS

# CTC WANTS A WORD WITH EUROSTAR

TC, the national cycling charity, has made a direct approach to Eurostar asking for a meeting to discuss the high-speed train provider's controversial plans to make cyclists dismantle and box up their bikes to travel.

European Cyclists' Federation has also slammed the move in a letter to Eurostar CEO Nicolas Petrovic, which was signed by French, Belgian, German and Dutch cycling bodies. More than 8,500 people have now added their names to the letter online.

MPs who are members of the All Party
Parliamentary Cycling Group have announced their support
for the cyclists' campaign, while the Mayors of both London
and Paris have criticised the proposed shift in cyclecarriage policy, indicating it undermines Eurostar's 'green'
pretensions

Currently cyclists can pay a £30 fee to take a complete bicycle on Eurostar via a registered luggage system. But from 1 November, Eurostar's policy on cycle carriage is set to change for the worse as cyclists will be forced to dismantle their cycles and box them up using the same service at the same price

same service at the same price.

The Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, turned to
Twitter on Monday to accuse Eurostar of sending out the
wrong signal as the French capital prepares to host the UN
Climate Change Conference (COP21) between November
30-December 11.

The Mayor's tweet read: "Disassemble your bike to take the @Eurostar? ... Wrong signal in the weeks of #COP21. #Paris Supporting soft mobility" @Anne\_Hidalgo Eurostar's response was: (roughly translated): "Hello the procedure has changed, the terms and conditions are the same with the goal of securing bicycles on board."



#### 6 Day Racing Returns to London

t may have been the first Six Day on these shores for 35 years, but the climax of Six Day London did not disappoint as Kenny De Ketele and Moreno De Pauw claimed overall victory by a matter of inches.

After an incredible Friday of racing, the Belgian duo were neck and neck with Chris Latham and Ollie Wood going into the final bend, after the Brits had led going into the final chase. But despite the best efforts of Latham as well as Iljo Keisse who was challenging, and the deafening roar of the London crowd, De Ketele held on to claim a breathtaking Six Day London victory.

"I am so happy," said De Pauw. "When we were here for the Olympics in London, the atmosphere of the Six Day was almost the same - I thought the roof was going off it was amazing."

Iljo Keisse and Gijs Van Hoecke laid down an early marker with a comfortable 20km madison win, but De Pauw and De Ketele were not far behind. Latham then won the first long lap of Six Day London ahead of Glen O'Shea of Australia, with Wood not far behind in third to make it a big points haul for team seven.

De Ketele then made his experience count to pip Germain Burton in the derny final, with Niki Terpstra and Keisse just behind - all the big guns hitting top gear at the right time to fight back. But Latham and Wood were not to be silenced, and sensational back-to-back victories in the team elimination and the flying 500m time-trial saw them earn enough points for an extra lap. That shot them to the top of the leaderboard with only the final chase remaining - and lifted the lid off the velodrome with a sell-out crowd roaring the pairing forward. But after another race that swung backwards and forwards, De Ketele's final flourish saw him pop the champagne alongside De Pauw. Meanwhile in the women's omnium, sat in second place overnight Anita Stenberg made a perfect start in her bid to haul her way to the top of the leaderboard, with a win in the opening 10km points race. But overall leader Malgorzata Wojtyra still had an imposing lead after finishing second, and kept her foot on the gas in a rapid elimination race to finish second once more behind world points race champion Stefanie Pohl.

And despite a heroic effort from Dame Sarah Storey to make a massive solo break in the scratch race, she was reigned in and it was Norway's Stenberg again who took a victory ahead of Pohl. Wojtyra held her lead through all three races to emerge as the women's Six Day champion, and could not contain her delight.

"I am really happy to of came here to London I have done some six days before but I am so happy to be back at the London Velodrome."



#### GB Cycling Team top the medal standings at UEC European Track Championships in Grenchen.

n exceptional performance by the women riders put the GB team at the top of the medal tally with six gold medals and three bronze medals.

Laura Trott successfully defended her omnium title in an impressive performance to collect her third gold medal at the Velodrome Suisse after success in the team pursuit and scratch race. The victory was the 23-year-old's tenth European title. Trott was leading the omnium after three events, she was second in the 500m time trial before winning the flying lap to open up a 34-point lead over Denmark's Amalie Dideriksen. Trott then added to her tally in the points race to secure victory.

Kate Archibald also sealed a hat-trick of victories. Part of the winning team pursuit squad, she then won the individual pursuit before returning to the track to triumph in the elimination race. Archibald qualified fastest in the individual pursuit with a time of 3:31.959 over 3000m to set up a final against France's Elise Delzenne. And she defended her title with a commanding ride in 3:32.832, nearly five seconds faster than Delzene.

Bronze for Ciara Horne in the individual pursuit confirmed an excellent championship for the women's endurance squad. Welshwoman Horne, another part of the winning team pursuit squad, overcame German Mieke Kroger by a second for the bronze.

In the keirin, Jason Kenny and Katy Marchant both went out in the second round of the men's and women's events respectively. Matt Crampton exited in the first round repechage of the men's event as Vicky Williamson crashed at the same stage of the women's competition,

fortunately suffering no serious injuries. Chris Latham and Ollie Wood finished in 12th in the Madison, colleting six points but losing two laps to winners Spain.



#### WORLD'S TOP SIX FORM THE WORLD ASSOCIATION OF CYCLING EVENTS

ix of the world's top mass participation cycling events have come together to form the World Association of Cycling Events (WACE).

WACE comprises six of the most prestigious and largest mass participation events in the world:

- Cape Town Cycle Tour (South Africa), the world's largest timed cycling event
- TD Five Boro Bike Tour (USA), the only closed road mass participation cycling event in New York City with 32,000 participants
- Vatternrundan (Sweden), one of the oldest and longest mass participation cycling event in the world with more than 6 million km ridden each year.
- L'Etape du Tour, (France) one of the most beautiful and toughest sportives in the world, ridden over a stage of the Tour de France.
- RideLondon (UK), the world's largest festival of cycling with 95,000+ riders on traffic-free roads in London and Surrey
- Granfondo Campagnolo Roma (Italy), a unique cycling experience in the historic Eternal City starting in front of the Colosseum.

WACE has been formed to promote and increase cycling worldwide. With more than 200,000 participants from 90 countries riding in WACE events each year, the new organisation is ideally placed to inspire new riders to take up the challenge of cycling and to encourage riders to travel to participate in other world class cycling events.

Hugh Brasher, President of WACE and Event Director for RideLondon said, "WACE events are working with city leaders to get more people cycling to help address the global issues of pollution, overcrowding on public transport and public health."













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# Ask Anita

Photos by Alex Loucaides

nita loves discovering new places by bike, having explored many miles of the National Cycle Network, and taken her trusty Ridgeback to roughly twenty countries so far. She does the occasional sportive, commutes by bike in London and Surrey and dabbles in triathlons, mountain biking and visiting cycling cafes. She currently works for the charity Sustrans as a project officer. Anita's main area of expertise is surrounding herself with experts, whose knowledge she will extract to answer all of your everyday cycling questions...

#### Dear Anita

All I want for Christmas is a Brooks saddle, a track pump, a merino base layer, some bike print socks, a funny bike poster, some cycle-branded coffee, new tyres, a bike stand, some Green Oil, a yellow jersey, a new bike...the list goes on. How do I avoid getting rubbish presents and make sure my loved ones give me the right gifts to fuel my two-wheeled passions?

Gift-swapping negotiations can be tricky; everyone favours different approaches to present-buying and has different levels of bad present tolerance. Surprises (within boundaries) can be good, wish lists are useful, and sometimes just saying what you want is the only way to avoid disappointment. Thankfully, as people who make no secret of our love for our bikes and the freedom they symbolise, we are quite an easy bunch to buy presents for on any budget.

Here are some thoughts from me – feel free to highlight, cross out, scribble, add hyperlinks, write HINT in marker pen and leave somewhere obvious for your loved ones to get inspired.

#### The dreamer

Maybe maps float your inflatable kayak -

detailed Ordnance Survey maps of places you keep talking about taking your bike, or books to give you inspiration like Jack Thurston's Lost Lanes or Matt Carroll's Escape Routes. The Sustrans online shop has lots of maps and books to covet. Art prints featuring maps of places you've been by bike can also be nice – I have a brilliant print on my wall with a bike picture imposed over a map, and the words 'Anita bloody loves riding her bike'. My friends know me well.



#### The technical type

Sometimes you need or want specific technical equipment such as chain whips or drive trains. To avoid your loved ones making failed embarrassing and costly trips to Ann Summers for such things, it's probably best not to be shy about telling people exactly what it is that you're after. And probably ordering it yourself so you get your Wiggle gold discount.

#### Bits and bobs

There are all sorts of useful and handsome bits out there for bike-lovers. Bike print scarves, lunch bags, jewellery, plant pots, tins, stationery, journals, leather wine-bottle holders, and of course clothing. T-shirts, pyjamas, socks, boxers with bikes on. Or sensible clothing for riding – a merino base layer, jersey or some armwarmers perhaps. Search around and you can find some true gems.



#### The minimalist

Maybe you have everything you need in life. Bravo to you if so. But surely it can't hurt to have one more bike-themed mug reminding you of somebody each time you fill it with bike themed coffee. And some bike-themed baked goods are always good for post-ride energy, right? You might want to make some notes about rides or write an ode to your steed – why not do so in a bike-themed notepad?

#### But what you really want is...

A merino wool onesie. No? Just me? Whatever it is that will bring joy to your life whether on your bike or off it, it's always made that extra bit special by being given to you by a friend.

Be sure to show your gratitude by getting out on your bike at some point during the festive period, with friends or alone, to show your appreciation for the gift of nature on two wheels - the best gift anyone could ask for.



#### THE BICYCLE DIARIES

#### ONE WOMAN'S SOLO CYCLE FROM LONDON TO TEHRAN: MONTH 2

Rebecca Lowe, a human rights journalist, has embarked on a 10,000km, 20-country 'bummel' through Europe and the Middle East, starting July 2015. Her aims are threefold: cultivate a pair of shapely calves that will be the envy of all she meets; survive; and shed light on a region long misunderstood in the West. She hopes to reach her final destination, Tehran, by March 2016.

#### Forges les Eaux to Geneva (July 31 – Aug 14, 520 miles) **Total miles so far:** 604

f there's one lesson I hope to take away with me after this trip, it's this: there is never a good reason for taking a ukulele on a bicycle. Remember it, write it down; it's important. If I save just one person from suffering in the way I have suffered, this whole endeavour will have been worthwhile.

The problem is that bicycles were never designed to carry ukuleles. They are designed to carry bags, panniers, parcels; sturdy, docile things that stay where you put them and lack an independent spirit. Ukuleles aren't like that. They are fickle and flighty, and have pretensions of freedom far beyond their station. 'I could have been a star!' you hear it cry behind you as you puff and splutter along a country lane. 'Jammed with George Harrison! Plucked by Pearl Jam! But instead here I am, bound and gagged three inches from your rump, forced into a life of humiliating depravity.'

At which point it throws off its manacles and pitches itself boldly onto the road – where it lies, stunned and subdued, until it is whisked back up and lashed with punitive impropriety against my arse again.

Two or three times a day we go through this ritual, which I humour with good grace and patience. In the meantime, I focus on hauling myself inch by inch across France. Over the course of a week, I progress leadenly through Gisors, Paris, Brie-Comte-Robert, Sens and Chablis, interspersed with endless sun-soaked fields of wheat, corn, barley and oats. Tiny villages appear and recede, each a charming rustic nutshell of cobbled streets, stone homesteads and ivy-clad barns. Flowers sprout everywhere, on walls and windows, balconies and balustrades, and I am saturated by smells: honeysuckle, cinnamon, lavender, rose.

Of course, I can't enjoy any of this. I am focused purely on survival. Particularly troublesome are certain anatomical parts that I won't ask you to dwell on too closely. My Brooks saddle, I have been reliably informed, will 'soften up' eventually, although at this stage I hardly see how that can be possible short of performing La fille mal gardée's clog dance on it every morning. According to my buttocks, which have become fairly expert on the matter, it is constructed from a form of steel-reinforced granite, almost certainly embraced by medieval disciplinarians for the punishment of unruly degenerates. The day it transforms into a sugary puff of clouds and fairy dust will certainly be a day of celebration, and no doubt go down as one of history's great scientific miracles.

I am keen to share my suffering with people, but sadly France turns out to be almost entirely empty. Even when I meet someone, communication isn't easy. Almost nobody speaks English and I am forced to dredge up dusty relics of GCSE French, punctuated by increasingly desperate gesticulations. It's far from ideal, but people generally seem receptive to my vivid descriptions of their pets and



#### **Rebecca Lowe**

Rebecca Lowe, a human rights journalist, started a 10,000km, 20-country 'bummel' through Europe and the Middle East in July 2015. Her aims are threefold: cultivate a pair of toned, shapely calves that will be the envy of all she meets; survive; and shed light on a region long misunderstood in the West. She hopes to reach her final destination, Tehran, by March 2016.



aunts, and my unsolicited directions to la discothèque.

I also discover that almost nowhere has wifi. Instead, I am directed time and time again to McDonald's, usually tucked sheepishly a couple of miles out of town. Soon I started associating the golden arches with my portal to the outside world, my heart leaping as a small portion of my soul dies.

France's reluctance to embrace progress seems almost a point of principle: we've nailed it, the country declares, surely others should adapt to us? And it has a point. When it comes to the important things in life, the French are hard to beat. You eat well – cheese, charcuterie, bread, boeuf – or you don't eat at all. American ideals of convenience and consumerism have no place here. Any why not? Nobody wants convenience until it's given to them, and then they just want more.

My usual dinner while camping is bread and Camembert. Most nights I sleep in the wild, though it takes me a while to get the hang of it. I frequently leave my search for a site too late and find myself racing sundown like a doomed extra in Dracula, desperate to find a suitable spot before Christopher Lee appears in my headlights, baring his fangs and beckoning me into his clammy embrace.

I make my first friends in Sens – a potentially pretty but lifeless town. R, a retired oil rig worker, speaks near-fluent English and beckons me over for a drink as soon as I arrive. It turns out he's travelled extensively, across Africa, South America and the Middle East, and loves Iran the most 'because of the people'.

As we talk, a young couple arrive with a baby. They are visiting from Saudi Arabia



and apparently met R two years ago in this exact spot. The couple, dressed casually in shorts and t-shirts, are extremely friendly and I wonder if they have a subversive edge, keen to dish the dirt on their homeland. I ask them what their country is like; do they ever feel restricted in any way?

'No no,' they say, ordering a couple of whiskies. 'Non-Muslims can drink, and we can drink in the home too.'

'And driving? Is it frustrating not being allowed to, as a woman?'

'I have no need,' she says, her expression placid and unreadable. 'I have a chauffeur. Most people do.'

In Sens, I stay the night at the bungalow of B, a local nature morte painter. He lives with his dying dog, Rocky, who sleeps





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in his studio and emits an overpowering stench of urine, to which B is clearly now immune. He shows me his painting scrapbook and brings out a bottle of 12-year-old Bowmore, exclaiming 'Écosse!' Un autre? he asks when I finish. I shake my head; I must go to bed. He pours me another.

I sleep like a stone, and the next morning B cooks me a breakfast of champions: omelette, pancakes, coffee, juice. It is just the first of many kindnesses I am to experience on the road and I feel deeply grateful.

After an enjoyable overnight stay in Chablis, where I revive my parched spirits with an emergency half-bottle of 2009 Domaine Vocoret et Fils Les Forets, Chablis Premier Cru, I plough on to Avallon: a lively, charming town with an economy curiously dependent on the manufacture of gingerbread. It's also unrelentingly, unforgivably cobbly.

The longer I cycle, the more strained my relationship with cobbles becomes. They may look pleasant; they may repel mud and dust, and grip well on horses' hooves – but so what? Hooves are few and far between these days, and aesthetics a long-proven obstacle to progress. In many

ways, cobbles are a worrying anachronism; a throwback to a bygone era of discomfort, hardship and haemorrhoids.

Why a civilised, 21st century person should be exposed to such indignities in this day and age is beyond me. Because, to be absolutely clear, there is no respectable way to cycle along a cobbled road. Sit down and your rump is pulverised like a soft-boiled potato; stand up and you triumphantly impose said rump on the world. Go fast and you appear to be having some kind of seizure; go slow and there's the concern people might think you're enjoying it.

My suggestion is that we be done with them once and for all. And I say this not just for me, but for every poor, innocent bystander who has had the unfortunate experience of seeing me glide into their town with all the languid grace of an oversexed electron.

And grace is certainly not on the agenda on the road to Autun. Having had no rest days so far, I am spent almost before I start. My lower back burns, shooting pains spear my left leg and my Achilles tendon creaks ominously. More concerningly, I seem to be losing the use of my right hand completely. Simple tasks are now beyond

me, like taking the top off the toothpaste or swearing at bad drivers. A series of increasingly alarmist internet articles tell me I have something called 'handlebar palsy', or ulnar nerve damage, and should stop cycling immediately. Perhaps I'll end up losing my hand altogether, I ponder, and become one of those celebrity amputees who wins the love of the nation by raising money for disabled children while climbing Kilimanjaro. I imagine being interviewed by Jon Snow and the tone I'd assume: modest and stoical, with a hint of self-deprecating charm. I'd be a massive hit, I know it.

It's a reassuring thought, but I can't distract myself for long. It's now 36 degrees and the hills feel monstrous. I feel like Sisyphus heaving his rock up the mountain, ceaselessly, fruitlessly. Finally, at the 43-mile mark, I collapse. There's no way I'm dragging myself the final ten miles, I swiftly decide – so someone else is going to have to do it for me.

I'm no stranger to hitchhiking, but I feel a little nervous about it. The last time I did it was in Mexico in 2004, when I'd been forced to accept a lift from a textbook psychopath after waking three hours late for my bus back to California with a splitting headache and a Chinese

tattoo meaning 'bottoms up' mysteriously inscribed on my lower back. I hadn't wanted to go with him, but no-one else would stop for me, strangely. This time I do better. After 20 minutes of ruthless rejection, a pick-up truck finally pulls over, driven by two semi-naked Adonises and an older gentleman. Rushing eagerly to their window, I suddenly hear myself telling the barefaced, brazen lie that I've hurt my ankle and need to get to the next town for help. It's a deeply shameful moment that I take no pleasure in recounting here, and that I have absolutely no doubt I would repeat again given the smallest opportunity.

When we arrive, the older man asks if I want a hospital. I assume he is making a joke about travelling in the bumpy truck and shake my head, guffawing loudly. It's only as I bound away like a gambolling fawn that I remember I'm meant to have a twisted ankle, and break into a belated, deeply unconvincing Keyser Söze-esque limp.

The next day is my birthday and I wake to the sound of rain, which is a blessed relief after the searing heat of the past week. I take the day off as a treat and gorge myself shamelessly, senselessly, washing it all down with glasses of delicious, creamy Pinot Noir and Beaujolais.

The rain continues the following day, and my hand is still a dead weight. It's starting to worry me. What if I have to end the

trip prematurely? Perhaps a more subtle version of the film '127 Hours' could be made about the first 12 days of my trip, I console myself, in which my hand gets increasingly achy until I have to seek medical attention. We could throw in the topless truck drivers and call it 'One and a Half Weeks' in the hope people might think it's somehow related to the Kim Basinger classic.

Trying to put it out of my mind, I slowly slog my way towards Geneva via Chalonsur-Saone, Macon and Oyonnax: tough, buttock-pummelling rides. Finally, my labours bear fruit as uphill climbs morph into triumphant descents surrounded by emerald lakes and thick, tree-clad gorges.

Then, suddenly, I am in Switzerland. I am surprised by the lack of border, and discover afterwards it is one of four non-EU members of the Schengen Agreement to eliminate passport controls. It's a good feeling, swooping seamlessly into another country without any kind of barrier. On a global scale, this is surely the ideal: a world without boundaries, where all can move freely.

I have mixed feelings about Switzerland, however. Is it a sinner or a saint? As the global headquarters of diplomacy and human rights, it is home to the UN and provided the setting for the Geneva Conventions. On the other hand, it happily acts as a shadowy playground for rich financiers via banking secrecy laws that

help perpetuate criminality and inequality across the world.

For me, the country is a little like a rich, philanthropic uncle whose polished exterior belies a myriad of unsavoury secrets — not to mention a deeply traditional set of social values. My friend K, who I am staying with, tells me there are worrying strains of sexism and racism among society. In 2009, a ban on new mosque minarets was approved in a national referendum following an aggressive campaign by a group of mainstream politicians, who released posters of niqab-clad women standing beside minarets resembling missiles.

It is a sad counterpoint to the Schengen ideals. Country borders may dissolve, but new, stronger ones emerge – between people, communities, cultures. To belong means to exclude, and the instinct to belong runs deep and has run since the beginning of time.

I dwell only momentarily on the primeval tribal urges of the human condition, however. Overjoyed to have briefly escaped my canvas coffin, I slip contentedly into a refreshing, deep, dreamless sleep. Next stop, I think excitedly as my eyelids droop: Italy!





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n Sunday 27th September, 3,000 riders, plus cycling legend Bernard Hinault and ONE Pro Cycling, took to the streets for the sold out inaugural L'Etape London by le Tour de France.

The three distance open road event based at the Lee Valley VeloPark took riders through much of the Stage Three route of the 2014 Tour de France. The courses came to an exciting climax with a timed lap of honour around the Lee Valley VeloPark road track, with official Tour de France jerseys being awarded to the fastest.

George Harper, Chris Opie, Josh Hunt, Sam Williams, Pete Williams and Tom Baylis from ONE Pro rode throughout the pelotons as ride captains. ONE Pro Cycling, who were officially launched in February and co-founded by England cricketer Matt Prior, completed the long route before handing out medals to finishers as they crossed the line.

Cyclists had the opportunity to meet the ONE Pro riders and their support team, step on-board their exclusive bus and get a true insight into the life of a professional cyclist. As well as this, riders also had the amazing opportunity to meet five-time winner of the Tour de France, Bernard 'the badger' Hinault and get their podiumfinish photo with him. Bernard completed the short route on the day in just under two and a half hours.

The event supported the charity Access Sport, an award winning charity whose mission is to transform lives through the power of sport. This highly-anticipated sportive was an opportunity for cyclists all over the country to come together and experience a number of quality features normally reserved for the pros. Thousands of pounds have been raised for the charity, with the top fundraiser receiving a Tour de France jersey signed by 2015 winner Chris Froome.

Nick Rusling, CEO of Human Race, the UK's largest organiser of running, cycling and triathlon events said: "It was great to see so many riders at the event, we're thrilled with the success of this inaugural sportive, which we hope will be even bigger and better next year."





# The Isle of Wight Cycling Festival

Text and photos by Hilary Searle

onely Planet recently included the Isle of Wight in its list of the ten best places in the world to cycle. Not only does it have outstanding coastal scenery and chocolate box villages but it also has an enormous road network for its size. For every busy road there is a quiet lane running almost parallel. An extensive network of bridleways offers fun and challenge for MTB enthusiasts while former railway lines have been turned into cycle tracks that are ideal for gentle family rides. The Isle of Wight Council is very keen to promote 'Bicycle Island' and the three week festival running from September 5th to 27th aimed to provide something for everyone, whether serious MTB

or road riders, leisure riders, or families with young children.

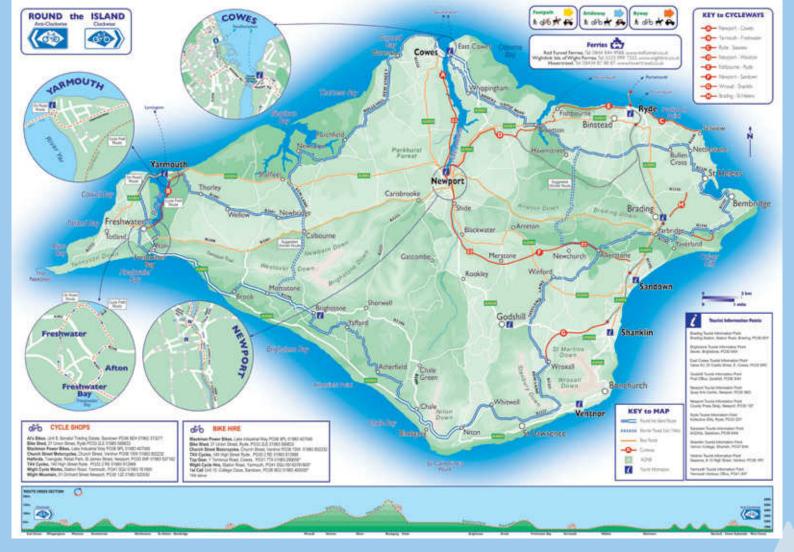
The festival began with a day of family cycling activities in Seaclose Park, Newport, A wide range of children's activities were on offer, ranging from tiny balance bikes, to junior cyclocross organised by British Cycling. A varied group of youngsters took part, some on junior race bikes with full Team Sky kit, others on BMX or Barbie bikes, all clearly enjoying themselves. Another popular feature was the pump track; kids seemed to take to this very well but the few adults who ventured on tended to fail dismally! On a more practical note, the long cargo bike on display was a big hit with both adults and

children.

Definitely in the 'don't try this at home' category was the stunt display of the Dare2Be riders, impressive and terrifying in equal measure. More useful inspiration was to be had from the MTB skills courses also held on the field for both beginner and intermediate riders. Of course, for the seriously intrepid, there was the Around the Wight Adventure Triathlon. Starting at 8.00am this included a sea swim, a cycle round the island and a trail run. Makes me feel tired just thinking about it.

For me, Saturday's highlight was the cycle cinema, held just as the light started to fade. Young and old gathered at Seaclose





to watch 'Paddington' with the projector powered solely by pedalling. A row of stationary bikes provided the power to inflate the giant screen and then run the film. Bikes were sized for both children and adults and there was no shortage of eager volunteers to provide the motive power. I have to admit that I found it surprisingly hard work and was happy to hand over to someone else after about 15 minutes.

Sunday was the most perfect cycling day imaginable. The sun shone brightly the whole day with just a gentle cooling breeze. The main event of the day, the MTB Slammer, offered 50k and 25k routes that attracted 100 riders. On a gentler note, forty people took part in the Wayfarer Cycle Touring Club's Sunday run from Newport to Fort Victoria with both an easy

ride and a faster paced section. Shorter rides included one to the iconic Needles and a fossil hunting ride from Shanklin. The main events were held at weekends but there was also plenty to do during the week. New or returning cyclists were well-served with free classes in basic bike maintenance and Bikeability training to improve riding skills and build confidence. Short family rides took place every day, usually with a focus on cake or ice cream. Nothing is closer to a cyclist's heart than food, and free food is guaranteed to bring them in droves. Wednesday morning saw the Bikers Breakfast laid on free of charge by local campaign group Cycle Wight with support from the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce. Arrive by bike to claim a free breakfast. More than 100 people turned out

to enjoy the wonderful spread provided on Newport quay. For some this was a quick socialising snack on their way to work while others enjoyed a leisurely meal and gossip before setting off on the 'Autumn Tints' ride to Freshwater Bay. The term 'Autumn Tints' refers not to the foliage of the trees but to the age of the riders with the slower group including several sprightly octogenarians. A strong east wind made for an almost effortless 15 miles to the seafront café stop at Freshwater Bay, one of the most beautiful spots on the island. Of course, the ride back was a different story! I was initially surprised to find that there were very few events scheduled for the second weekend of the festival but all became clear when I realised that this was the same weekend as the Bestival music festival -

all ferries would have been fully booked months in advance. Local clubs invited visiting cyclists to join them on Sunday with a choice of Mountain Biking with the Sunday Social Ride or a lei surely road ride with the Wayfarers. Both rides left from the old Merstone station at 9.30 and 9.00 am respectively. The Wayfarer easy riders enjoyed a gentle 14 mile ride to the tea garden in Niton while the normal section joined them after a hillier 20 mile ride. The tea stop is always the highlight of any bike ride but the Wayfarers' stoving section eschews the joys of the café in favour of brewing up on a handy picnic bench. Trangias are the stove of choice for most but there are devotees of gas stoves and flasks are acceptable. Large slabs of cake are mandatory! The weather gods had smiled throughout the first week but Monday brought gales and heavy rain that continued into Tuesday morning leading to the cancellation of the planned 30 mile ride exploring central and west Wight. While the men cried off, myself and another lady still turned up,



and actually enjoyed a pleasant ride in rapidly improving weath-

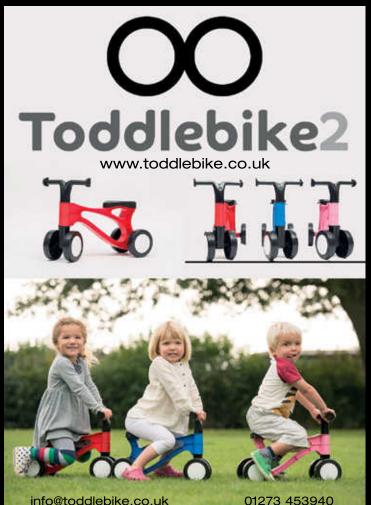
ike maintenance classes were held in four different locations and I decided to give the one nearest to me a try. As an experienced cyclist I wasn't sure if this would teach me anything I didn't already know but it turned out to be excellent, covering the setting up and tuning of brakes and gears as well as the M check and puncture repair. It is easy to forget that there is a definite technique

to removing and refitting tyres and tubes. The 3 hour class was completely free, a genuine bargain.

On Thursday, the two mountain bike rides were blessed with sunny weather, and by the weekend conditions were perfect for the plethora of cycling events taking place. Saturday offered a choice of gentle on and off road rides, a family ride on the Red Squirrel Trail and Frocks on Bikes - 'a chance for women to dress to impress - on bikes!' Obviously not the place for me and my smelly lycra! Sunday offered two children's rides, a family ride, and yoga for cyclists, but the main event was 'Cycle the Wight', a circular 50 or 70 mile route around the island organised in conjunction with the British Heart Foundation. The 'Round the Island' cycle route is permanently signposted and mostly follows quiet country lanes. Riders could start at any time between 9 and 11 am with a choice of start points near to the ferry terminals or from the Blackgang viewpoint on the south coast. I opted for the 70 mile route starting at Blackgang and enjoyed blue skies, quiet roads and









The Isle of Wight has over 500 miles of cycle routes and trails for all ages and abilities. You'll discover secrets that you'll never see by car, ranging from red squirrel hides in ancient woods to stunning views across the Downs, countryside and coast.







Plan your cycling adventure on the Island's official Tourist Board website:

visitisleofwight.co.uk

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wonderful sea views all the way to Freshwater. This section has the longest climbs of the whole ride but the stunning scenery provides ample reward for the effort. It has to be said that this is not an easy ride and I take my hat off to the charity riders who had never done anything like this before. A total of 1400m of ascent means flat roads are few and far between and short steep climbs are frequent. I opted for the hillier, on road, route between Freshwater and Yarmouth but the riverside cycle path is a much prettier option for those with wider tyres. Pleasant flat lanes led to the picturesque village of Newtown, a spot where I often linger, but today it was on to Cowes, a series of up and downs leading to the esplanade and fine views across the yacht-filled Solent. Checkpoints supplied water and energy bars but I also carried a flask and sandwiches which I ate while waiting for the chain ferry across the Medina to East Cowes. Road closures meant a lengthy detour on busier roads from Wootton to Havenstreet. I hoped this might miss out a few hills but no such luck! Skirting

seafront, through tiny lanes to Alverstone, the climb to Upper Ventnor, down to Niton and then the final climb back up to the top of Blackgang. Around 300 people took part but the staggered starts meant I saw very few other riders. If you are quite happy with your own company it is an excellent challenging ride.

he final week of the festival was fairly quiet although Bikeability training continued and there was a gentle family ride each day. The major event of the weekend was the Wightlink Wight Challenge combining a 19 mile MTB ride, 2 mile canoe and 8 mile run. I preferred to finish the festival with the Wayfarers' Sunday morning run, a hilly ride with wonderful views, and the afternoon Tweed Ride. a gentle meander around Newport wearing vintage costume. Great fun until I had to nip into the Ladies while sporting a false moustache! A champagne toast provided the perfect ending as we raised a glass to cycling, the Isle of Wight and the festival. Cheers!



# A GRAND TIME AT THE EASTBOURNE GRAND HOTEL

#### Text and Photos by Simon White

e visit the Grand Eastbourne Hotel in East Sussex to find out what makes this location an absolute must for cyclists;

I don't drive, so when planning a family trip to

East Sussex from Margate in Kent, I was relieved to find a fairly straight forward train journey ahead with just one change at Ashford. Eastbourne station is in the town centre, a 15 minute walk from the seafront, which is 'award winning' for its clean seas and magnificent beaches. It is lifeguard-patrolled, with an assortment of top end seafront restaurants and bars, with a kid-safe wristband scheme and children's attractions.

Having found the Pier it was a short walk as the sheer size of the Grand Hotel struck me, a towering palacelike appearance commanding a vast area directly opposite the beach, which delighted my six-year old daughter and three-year old boy to

no end. Met at the entrance by a suitably smart concierge we are shown into reception, and I began to realize exactly why this traditional building is the only seaside

- Julia

hotel in the UK to achieve 5 stars...

When booking in, children are given their own forms to fill in for their entertainment and presented with a 'sailor' goody bag. We are escorted to the family suite which the children

heated) a gym, sauna, whirlpool spa and a whole host of girly beauty treatments that Angie delighted in. In the meantime I had a chance to re-visit my misspent youth on the full size snooker table.

Later we found the cocktail bar and the two restaurants to be just as luxurious as the rest of the building, with a dedicated family area to make things easier with young children. The Mirabelle restaurant is particularly fine, voted by the Independent as one of the top 50 best restaurants in the UK.

Being just a little too 'pino noired' that evening, it is not until the following morning that I perused the range of bikes available to rent from the Hotel. Bike storage is also available for guests who bring their own bikes. I decided to take advantage of being a stone's throw from the South Downs National Park, 1600 kilometers of natural

beauty, with breath taking views and some of the best mountain biking terrain in the country. Not forgetting a beautiful coastline, with Brighton just 19 miles away. Eastbourne itself hosts its own cycling festival in June, which is well-attended and provides cycling events for every type of rider.

When returning it was time to pack up and we all felt a little sad at departing from such an extravagant place. It wasn't just the grand and posh décor that made our stay so enjoyable, it is the fact that this traditional establishment with exemplary service genuinely invokes calming relaxation with a feeling of complete contentment, perfectly situated in an unchanged and unspoilt British seaside town.



waste no time in exploring; at this point I'm just praying they don't break something expensive!

The interior is impeccable, with a rich Victorian feel, large rooms with modern amenities that cater for an entire family. Board games, a PlayStation and even a complimentary laptop to borrow, are just a phone call away. But being eager to use the facilities, we unpack the swimwear and head to the spa area.

I perhaps showed a little too much excitement when realizing there is a supervised play room! So leaving the little darlings to wreck the place, my partner Angie and I tested out the spa and wellbeing facilities, which include an indoor and outdoor pool (both



# WELCOME TO SNOWDONIA

By Llinos Angharad of The Snowdonia National Park Authority.

Photos thanks to ©SNPA

roeso is the Welsh word for 'Welcome', and the Park Authority welcomes all cyclists to Snowdonia so that everyone may see for themselves some of the splendours and wonders of the National Park.

Snowdonia National Park is a special part of the country where people come to relax and enjoy a wide range of leisure activities in spectacular surroundings. Its landscape is unique. Nine mountain ranges cover approximately 52% of the Park and include many peaks that are over 3,000 feet (915m). Apart from the beauty and charm of its high mountains, Snowdonia is a delightfully varied landscape of steep river gorges, waterfalls and green valleys. Oak, ash, rowan and hazel woodlands are found scattered throughout the Park whilst the beautiful Dyfi, Mawddach and Dwyryd estuaries and twenty-three miles of coastline and sandy beaches contribute to the overall diversity of the landscape.

There are more National Nature Reserves in Snowdonia than in any other National Park in Britain, and it is home to a wealth of special habitats and fauna and florathe Snowdon lily (Lloydia serotina, a rare arctic-alpine plant), found on the slopes of Snowdon and 'y gwyniad' (Corgeonus clupeoides pennantii, a fish that is unique to Llyn Tegid) are just two examples. In addition to conservation work, management work is also essential. The Park works continually to control the Rhododendron ponticum and Japanese knotweed within the National Park.

Considered as the backbone of Wales, the area has inherited the geological developments of the Ice Age. There are numerous U-shaped valleys, crushed scree on cliff-faces and mountain lakes, all shaped by glaciers. History and culture are everywhere and the Welsh language is the mother tongue of 58.6% of the population. The landscape illustrates the history of the area through Stone Age burial chambers, Roman forts, churches, castles, slate quarries and other industrial works.

Snowdonia National Park was created in 1951 and is the largest in Wales at 823 square miles or 2,176 square kilometres. It is twice the size of Anglesey, a little smaller than Pembrokeshire, the third largest National Park in Britain after the Cairngorms and Lake District and the same size as the counties of Cardiff, Merthyr, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Newport, Caerphilly and Torfaen put together.

Its English name derives from its highest mountain, Snowdon. Standing at 1,085m above sea level, it is the highest mountain in Wales, higher than all mountains in England and on a clear day you can see as far as the Lake District and Ireland.

Every year, over 6 million visitor days are spent here and in recent times, Snowdonia has become one of the most popular destinations for outdoor activities in the UK. People visit Snowdonia from all over the world to explore this dramatic and beautiful area. The area

is renowned for its walking and climbing but it also has some of the best mountain biking facilities in the world.

#### LÔN GWYRFAI

This is a multi-use recreational path created especially for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The path leads through a variety of landscapes offering fantastic views of the surrounding area. The path from Rhyd Ddu to Llyn y Gadair is even and wide and therefore suitable for some wheelchairs. The remainder of the path has some steep sections, and there is a footbridge to cross in Beddgelert Forest. If you don't fancy walking both ways, you can create a circular route by using the bus service, or the Welsh Highland Railway to bring you back to the start. Distance: 4½ miles - 7 km Time: Around 3 hours

#### MARIN TRAIL

The Marin Trail near Betws y Coed is a proper mountain bike trail in every sense of the term. Big climbs, big descents, brilliant single track and truly awesome scenery make this a trail to remember. Most, but not all, of the climbs are on forest roads and tracks giving you time to take in the views of the mountains of Snowdonia, and all of the descents are on single track. The single track varies from very tight, technical and rocky to wonderfully open and flowing, from dark forest



to exposed ridgelines.
Distance: 15.5 miles / 25km
Time: About 3 hours

#### MAWDDACH TRAIL, DOLGELLAU

This trail is located in the south of Snowdonia National Park and is considered to be one of the best trails in Britain, for cyclists as well as walkers. It follows the beautiful Mawddach estuary, giving visitors the chance to experience some of Snowdonia's splendour, striking scenery and beautiful wildlife. The trail stretches for nine miles between Dolgellau and Barmouth and can be joined at several points, including Morfa Mawddach and Penmaenpool. Mawddach trail also follows the track bed of the old railway line from Barmouth to Ruabon. The line was opened in 1865 and proved to be very popular with visitors and was also used briefly to carry slate. As cars became more popular, the line became less cost-effective and was closed in 1965. The river Mawddach has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation because of the salt marsh and lowland peat habitats there. Distance: 9 miles - 15km (one

#### **BEDDGELERT FOREST**

Enjoy the stunning views east towards Snowdon along the Beddgelert Forest mountain biking trails. There are two loops: Yellow Trail

Distance: 6 miles (9.5km)

Time: 1 - 2 hours

**Green Trail** 

Distance: 2.5 miles (4km) Time: 1 - 1.5 hours

#### **PENMACHNO FOREST**

The Penmachno Forest mountain biking trails are challenging with steady climbs and with spectacular views. They are maintained by the local Menter Bro Machno. There are two loops and one trail:

Dolen Machno Distance: 19km (11 miles) Time: About 1.5 - 3 hours



Dolen Eryri

Distance: 11km (7 miles) Time: About 1 - 2 hours

Penmachno Trail Dolen Machno & Dolen

Eryri)

Distance: 30km (19 miles) Time: About 2.5 - 5 hours

#### **COED Y BRENIN**

Coed y Brenin, north of Dolgellau, is owned by Natural Resources Wales and is home to a network of fantastic hand built all weather single tracks. Coed y Brenin was the first forest to be developed for the sport of mountain biking and to this day retains its reputation as the sports premier location. Here, there are eight routes suitable for everyone from families and novices to rocky technical trails for expert riders.

#### **SNOWDON**

Off-road cycling is a relatively new activity which can give rise to conflict with landowners and other countryside users. Like walking and horse riding, it can lead to damage and erosion on fragile upland surfaces, particularly when the ground is wet, or when large numbers of walkers and cyclists are involved.

The following voluntary agreement to remedy the problem has been negotiated between the cycling organisations, the Sports Council for Wales, Gwynedd County



September - Please do not cycle to or from the summit of Snowdon during this period.
From October to the end of April - Full access.

A pdf map, available from the National Park website has been produced which will help you plan your day with a circular route which can include an ascent of Snowdon before 10.00am or after 5.00pm.

#### For more information on Snowdonia

National Park, please visit the website, www.eryri-npa.gov.uk,



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- And many more...



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# A WEEKEND CYCLING IN... SROWDONIA

#### SEVEN REASONS TO GO CYCLING IN SNOWDONIA

For the sensation of pure escapism would be at the top of our list. Cities and urban conurbations are a thing of the past. They do things differently here. To cycle in a landscape so dramatic, so removed from workaday hustle and bustle, is as close to meditation on two wheels as you'll get.

Easy to get to. Despite the apparently endless eiderdown of creased greenery, Snowdonia is easily accessible by train thanks to its proximity to large Midland cities. Or, of course, if you are travelling by car, it is pretty much equidistant between the top and bottom of England. It took me four hours to reach from London.

Where there's mountains! If road cycling isn't your bag, the area is more than accommodating o mountain bikers, with downhill hotspots such as Coed Y Brenin attracting enthusiasts from every corner of the globe.

Mount Snowdon. Why not supplement your trip to Wales with a traversal of Mount Snowdon, England and Wales's highest mountain. If you are brave/stupid enough, it is even possible to reach the summit by bike - but it would definitely help if your steed of choice had full-suspension, and an engine... and wings preferably.

Get cultured. Although we are all on the same landmass, arriving in the wilds of Snowdonia will feel like you have just alighted after a long haul international flight. The language used in this part of Wales is predominantly, you guessed it, Welsh, and the locals are more than happy to give free lessons on request. Especially after a few beers.

Get that Tour de France feeling. We're in the high mountains here and there's no better place - in the UK - to replicated (albeit badly) the heroes of the world's greatest bicycle race. Engage the granny gear and get ready to grind.

Bring the family. There are myriad family-friendly off-road routes in Snowdonia catering for little legs Enjoy a peaceful pedal amid the national park's spectacular surroundings with nary and engine in

MEIRIONNYDD

his ride begins in Betys-Y-Coed
- a popular base for hikers,
bikers and holiday makers and spends the earlier stages
of the route under the shadow of
Mount Snowdon before looping
back round through a rucked carpet
of luscious Snowdonian scenery speckled with lakes, picture-postcard
settlements, and encompassed by
stunning pasture land. However,
cycling in such a theatrical arena is
never without its fair share of, can we
say, extreme physical application - you
will literally be climbing mountains.

The first such struggle you will endure, after a rolling five miles or so out of Betys-Y-Coed, is a traversal of Pen-Y-Pass. This is where walkers amass to scale Mount Snowdon, so it can be rather busy during the summe



quiet and allow you to focus on your own personal battle. Cycling in areas like this really is a paradox. While your legs and lungs are functioning at full capacity, combining to propel you towards the summit, your mind is elsewhere, in a much happier place, delighting in the great outdoors, pondering the endless range of peaks before you, wondering why on earth you'd never been to the place before. And after the baptism of fire up the first pass and you begin that well-earned descent, a sensation of satisfaction sweeps over you, a feeling you'd be hard-pressed to happen upon in leafy suburban lanes.

Now, with the blood suitably pumping, a



thin layer of sweat collecting on your back, the ride has you - you are utterly immersed in both the process of turning the pedals and the Snowdonian wilderness, and after the travails of the initial climb you are able to bask in rolling terrain until you meet the double lake combo of Peris and Padarn. Break out the bananas and soak up the scenery.



This fuelling strategy will now likely serve you well - for after rounding the farmost lefthander of this anticlockwise loop you are presently greeted by a wall of a climb en route to Betws Garmon from Cwm-Y-Glo.

Although this stretch of road isn't in Snowdonia proper, and

instead skirts the national park's border, it still comprises a certain amount of venom,

and after the initial ascent, the road then plunges down allowing a cursory recovery period, before steadily climbing back into the park, and then swooping down to lunch in Beddgelert.

If there was ever any excuse to feast with wild abandon, then this lunchtime would be it. With a solid 30 hilly miles in the legs, and a further 20 or so remaining, you should, nay must, take this opportunity to unscrupulously consume a gleeful quota of calories.

The last challenge of the day comes straight out of the starting gate post lunch. Some eight miles of ascent awaits you, the last five of which boast gradients that will nigh-on negate the double helpings of cake you had at lunch. But upon reaching the peak of this climb, the day's toil is all but over, and you can virtually freewheel back to Betys-Y-Coed, having completed a thigh-busting, yet soul-cleansing day in the saddle.

#### Take a brake: breakfast, lunch and dinner in Snowdonia

Breakfast: Snowdonian villages tend to comprise the bare essentials; namely, a pub or two, a couple of B&Bs, and, if you're lucky, a Spar or a Co-op.

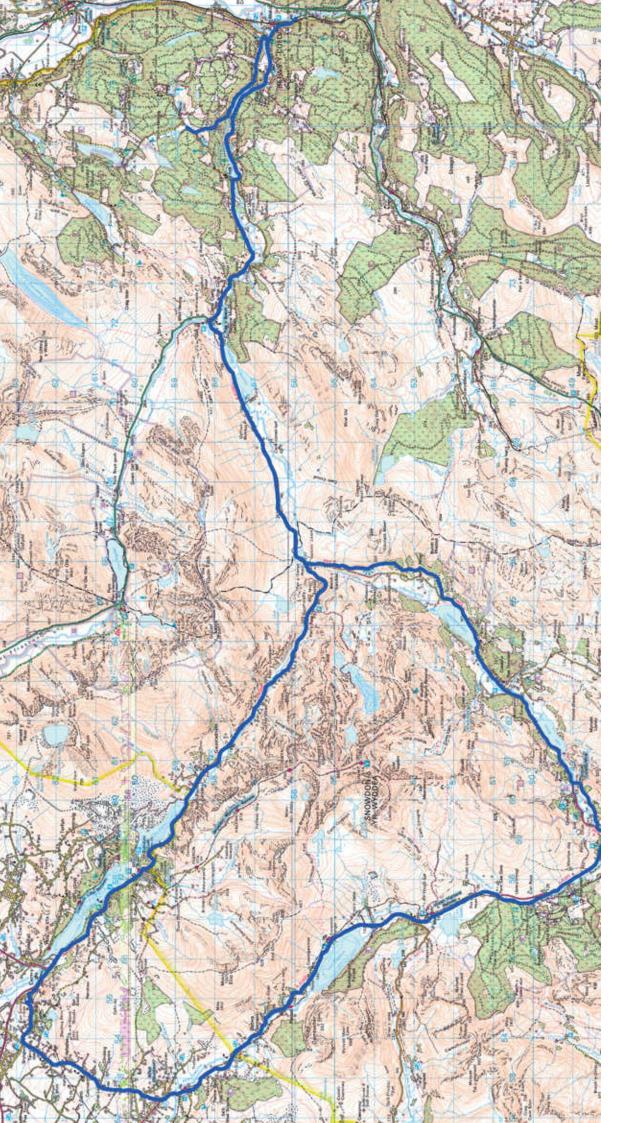
Obviously, breakfasting in a B&B - in my case, Ellen's Castle in Dolwyddelan - will see you served with a full plate of calorific items custom-designed for a hard day out on the bike. I also bought a packet off Welsh cakes from the local Spar, just in case the bacon, eggs, sausage, beans, mushroom and rack of toast failed to comply.

http://www.hotelinsnowdonia.co.uk/

**Lunch:** The chocolate box settlement of Beddgelert, situated at the halfway stage of the route, is encompassed by sumptuous sprawling peaks and offers a fair range of pubs and eateries. Caffi Gywnant, on the descent down from Pen-Y-Pass, boasts a menu comprising, amongst other items, homemade lamb burgers and freshly baked cakes. Enjoy these in a friendly and relaxed environment to the backdrop of a dramatic mountainscape.

http://www.cafesnowdon.co.uk/

**Dinner:** Dinner came in the form of a hearty plate of hot fodder back at Ellen's Castle. With offerings on the menu such as Welsh lamb cutlets, seafood pie, and beef pie, you can exert yourself on the bicycle during the day, safe in the knowledge that sapped strength will presently be repleted in the form of delicious local fare. However, if you wish to get involved in an ale or three after a hard day in the saddle, there is a more comprehensive range in Y Gwydyr, a friendly pub just a few hundred yards down the road.



# A WEEKEND CYCLING IN... SNOWDONIA MAP

PATH LENGTH: 81.41 KM / 50.59 MILES.



Join us for the 'London Marathon of cycling' and help people on the autism spectrum lead the lives they choose!

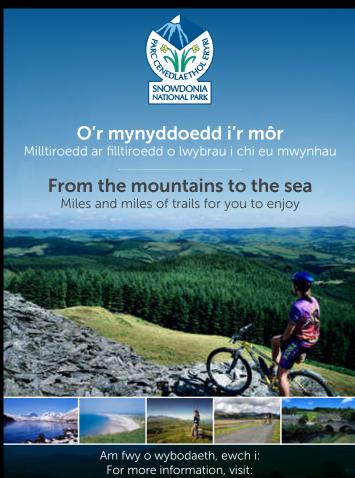
The only way to guarantee your place in the UK's most iconic closed road sportive is through a charity like The National Autistic Society.

To find out more visit: www.autism.org.uk/ridelondon16.

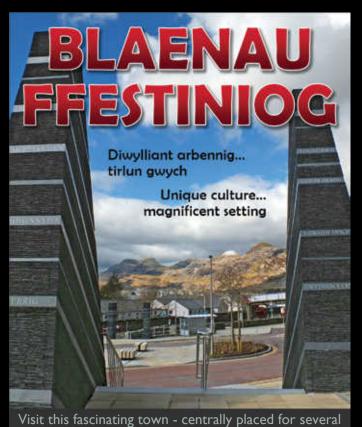


Accept difference. Not indifference.

The National Autistic Society, a charity registered in England and Wales (269425) and in Scotland (SC039427). 2481 201015



www.eryri-npa.gov.uk



cycling centres, zip wires and many other adventure activities. Quality accommodation, many with cycle storage facilities, will ensure you a warm welcome.

www.blaenauffestiniog.org

## LON LAS CYMRU: CROSS WALES CYCLE ROUTE

Up for a challenge? Lôn Las Cymru runs for over 250 miles down the whole length of Wales from Holyhead in the North to Chepstow or Cardiff in the South. It is one of the toughest of all the long distance routes on the National Cycle Network.

### **ROUTE DETAILS**

**From - to:** Tourist Information Centre, Holyhead, Anglesey to The Oval Basin Piazza, Cardiff or Chepstow Castle

Distance: 250 miles

National Cycle Network: National Route 42

More information: http://bit.ly/1E7TGcO

With over 250 miles of quiet lanes, and family-friendly traffic free cycle paths that take you over three distinct mountain ranges and two national parks, Lon Las Cymru takes in some of the most stunning and diverse landscapes in the British Isles.

Taking in three mountain ranges it requires a good pair of lungs and a strong pair of legs. The rewards are more than worth it: the scenery is some of the most stunning in the British Isles, including the quiet rural lanes of Anglesey, the majestic woodlands of Coed-y-Brenin Forest, the atmospheric Mawddach Estuary, the lovely valley of the River Wye, followed between Llangurig and Glasbury and the panoramic views enjoyed from Gospel Pass on the route through the Black Mountains.



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## Cycling World Letter Page

We are starting a Letter Page so please send your thoughts, feelings, ideas and insights about all things cycling. Letter of the month wins:

A Velo Hinge Home Bicycle Storage. It is a foldaway hook that fits most standard road, mountain and kids' bikes



#### Send letters to:

Email: editor@cyclingworldmag.co.uk
Post: Editor, Cycling World Magazine, Myrtle Oast, Kemsdale
Road, Fostal, Faversham, Kent ME13 9JL
We may edit your letter for brevity and/or clarity.
We look forward to hearing from you.

Editor

## THIS MONTH'S COMPETITION WINNERS

Chris Goodman of Coventry met us at the NEC show in Birmingham, became a new subscriber and won the prize draw for Deepa Mann-Kler's painting of Sir Bradley Wiggins. Deepa has designed two of this month's Christmas cards.

ack aged twelve of East Kent has won our Design a Christmas Card Competition, also included with this month's edition. Jack wins a copy The Bike Deconstructed by Richard Hallett. Thanks to Octopus Publishing Group for donating the prize.







www.deanforestcycles.co.uk Tel: 01594 368009
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# ON THE TWELFTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS MY CYCLIST GOT FROM ME...

What do you buy the cyclist who has got all the latest kit and accessories? Worried about getting the wrong size cycling apparel, or being told it's last year's kit or more pseudo than retro? Fear not, Cycling World Editor has found some of the more original and quirky gifts for cyclists.

#### CHRISTMAS BICYCLE DECORATIONS

#### £6.95 EACH

It can be pretty challenging to find a Christmas bicycle decoration, but CycleMiles has a great choice for your Christmas tree, table or mantelpiece. Rocking Santa, Rocking Reindeer or Rocking Snowman all come riding a bike. These beautifully-made Christmas decorations measure 13cm x 12cm each, are hand painted on both sides and made from metal.

Available at www.cyclemiles.co.uk/shop/christmas/

#### **BICYCLE CUP AND SAUCER**

#### £7.95

There are plenty of great cycling mugs to drink your tea or coffee from and CycleMiles seems to stock most of them, but we haven't seen a bicycle teacup and saucer before. This lovely ceramic cup and saucer is perfect for the tea drinking cyclist in your life. Alternate men's and women's bicycle designs on a white background. Dishwasher safe, 8cm diameter cup, 13cm diameter saucer.



Available at: www.cyclemiles.co.uk/shop/gifts-under-10/bicycle-cup-and-saucer/

#### **RACER CUFFLINKS**

#### £15.95

Here's a nice little addition to your office wear or those formal cycling events. Cufflinks are an opportunity show a bit of individual flare, so what better than racer cufflinks. Plated in durable Rhodium and highly polished with a high level of detail Supplied in a black leatherette box.

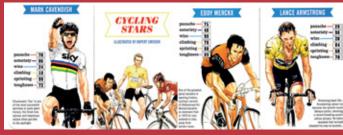


Available at www.targetvelo.com

### **CYCLING STARS TRUMP CARD GAME**

## £8.95

I've always enjoyed Top Trumps so relish any cycling card game. There are a few out there, including bicycles or the current pros, but my favourite is this version of all time greats. Pitch the racers of the sixties against the champions of today with this collection of thirty illustrated cards. Authored by Claire Beaumont, a lead creative at London-based bespoke bicycle manufacturer Condor Cycles. Illustrated by Rupert Smissen who specialises in portraiture and figurative drawing.



Published by Bloomsbury Press, December 2014

Available at: www.bloomsburystore.com/products/cycling-stars-top-trumps



#### **TOUR DE FRANCE STAMP COLLECTIONS**

#### RANGE FROM £5.72-£15

If you're like me and collect anything cycling related, then stamps are a must for a collector. I used to have to get TdeF stamps during trips to France until I discovered the wonderfully independent Isle of Man Post Office. They produced a collection of eight stamps to celebrate the 100th edition featuring, among others, Bradley Wiggins, Mark Cavendish and the great Miguel Indurain, including images from the archive of L'Equipe Presse. Available as First Day Cover, Presentation Pack, and postcards.

Champs-Firster

Champs-Firster

137.5 km

Available at www.iompost.com/stamps-coins/collection/tour-de-france-edition-100/

#### **BIKE SPOKE KEY RING**

#### £35

I met Mike, the maker, at the NEC show and witnessed the pride of a craftsman. His individually handmade and beautifully polished stainless steel key rings are made from recycled bicycle spokes. The saddle and handlebars are capped with polished brass spoke ends. Tough enough to withstand all those everyday bumps and knocks from your keys.

Available at: www.respokedesigns.com
where you can also see a full range recycled spoke cycling iewellery.



#### £75

Don't be mistaken into thinking that something discarded can't be luxurious. These unisex bracelets made from recycled bicycle inner tubes certainly offer eco-luxury style for bicycle lovers with a choice of style and size. Handmade in London. Worth exploring the website for some impressive bags and dresses.



## BOCADILLO FROM LUCHO DILLITOS: GUAVA SNACK

#### £15 + P&P

Christmas wouldn't be complete without something to eat and what a cyclist desires is quick carbs, sugar, good flavour and bite-size. All present in an old-time staple for Columbian cyclists now available in the UK: bocadillo is made from guava paste-85% guava and 15% sugar. Wrapped in a thin, dry leaf which is bio-degradable, great if it inadvertently ends up roadside. Melts in your mouth but not in your jersey pocket.

Available at www.luchodillitos.co.uk







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#### **BICYCLE LAPTOP SLEEVE**

#### £23 +P&P

Christmas wouldn't be complete without a bit of snow and we found some on this Society6 laptop sleeve. This 13" sleeve has been designed by Kiersten Marie Photography. It is lightweight and made from polyester. The design is printed on both sides to fully showcase the artwork while keeping your gear protected. Pulling back the YKK zipper, you'll find the interior is fully lined with super soft, scratch resistant micro-fibre. Worth exploring the website for a variety of cycling related gifts

Available at https://society6.com/product/cycle-luw\_laptop-sleeve#58=428

#### **ROAD BIKE COMPONENTS PICTURE**

#### £110

All cyclists like to surround themselves with the theme and no doubt already have a cycling print and limited edition photo hanging on the wall. But how many have got a box-framed, diecast metal, road bike components display? These three-dimensional pictures look great and you can choose from either black or white picture frame and various bike frame colours. There is also an MTB version.

Available at www.targetvelo.com

### **WRAPPING PAPER AND CARDS**

## CARDS £2.75 AND WRAPPING PAPER PACKS £4

To keep in the theme the gift needs to be wrapped in cycling paper with a cycling card. Ginger & French have an extensive range of Christmas cards that would delight any cyclist and their bike-themed paper comes in packs of two sheets with two tags and is made with 100% recycled, uncoated, thick paper, with 100% vegetable oil-based inks. It's 100% guaranteed to make the recipient feel you've gone the extra mile.

Available at www.gingerandfrench.com

## A SUBSCRIPTION TO CYCLING WORLD MAGAZINE

#### £40

If you haven't already got one what better gift that a year's subscription for both print and App version of your favourite cycling magazine. The UK's number one magazine for leisure, tourism, sportives and commuting with a quarterly E-bike feature. Keep upto-date on the latest cycling products including books and films.

Available overleaf...









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## **Cycling Objet d'Art**

Targetvelo are bike addicts who love all things cycling. So fill your Christmas stocking with something different this year...

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From sourcing and manufacturing various collections of cycling objets d'Art. There is a varied selection to choose from. Covering all tastes, style and diciplines.

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Classic Cufflinks £14.95 RRP



Bone China Classic Mug £15.00 RRP



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Classic Road Bike



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The above are just some examples of what we offer, there is much much more to discover at...

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# THE KIDS WANT A BIKE FOR CHRISTMAS

n his free time, Cycling World Editor coaches balance biking and cycling to young children. Here he recommends some favourites, progressing through the ages, which would make perfect gifts for young riders.

Balance bikes are a fantastic way to

teach young children balance and co-ordination skills. Mastering a balance bike, in my experience, often sees children make the transition to a traditional pedal bike much quicker and easier. Children sit on a balance bike with their feet touching the ground and move along. With no pedals, heavy chains, stabilisers

or mechanical insides balance bikes are normally lighter and easier to manoeuvre then traditional bicycles.

Please note: maximum weights are an upper limit and adults are discouraged from riding the bikes as it can cause injury and damage.

## TODDLEBIKE £25 (inc. P&P)



Toddlebikes can be used as the first step towards independent riding, getting toddlers out of their buggies and on the way towards learning to ride as soon as possible after learning to walk. I appreciate this age varies immensely, but on average it's about 18 months. Mark 2 has just been launched which looks more 'bikey' to appeal to users. The in-line four wheel configuration makes riding much like on a balance bike but allows it to stay upright when stationary.

Child Age: 18 months-3 years

(as soon as they get walking)

Max Weight: 100 kg

Weight of bike: super lightweight at 0.8kg. A toddler can

carry it and it can be carried on pushchair

Wheel Size: 13 cm

**Seat Height:** 25.5 cm **Handlebar Height:** 35 cm

Available at: www.toddlebike.co.uk

## THE MICRO BALANCE BIKE £99



I expected something good from micro as my son has been zooming around on a micro scooter ever since he could walk. A great first two-wheeled balance bike for children approaching two years old. Light and easily manoeuvred it feels fast and comes in five attractive colours. There is no brake, which at this age can prove just to be an unwanted distraction. Special features are the fact it is incredibly light, the saddle has a good adjustment range so it should last up until four years old and mark free wheels allows indoor riding, which is how I run my coaching sessions.

Child Age: 2-4 years

(inside leg 36-42cm)

Max Weight: 20kg Weight of bike: 3.2kg

adjustment:

Wheel Size: 200mm diameter, 35mm width

**Seat Adjustment:** 36 to 42 cm **Handlebar** 51 to 53.5cm

Available at: www.micro-scooters.co.uk

48 Cycling World
December 2015

## **TRAIL RUNNER XL £150**



This is a great looking bike that moves well. With a hand-brushed, clear coated finish and faux leather, riveted seat, it looks like the first bike the Fonz would have ridden. A light frameset keeps weight to a minimum and offsets the larger tyres making grip and ride comfort key features. The wheels are large for the frame size, but with knobbly tyres the bike is suitable for a bit of off-road and rough riding.





Child Age: 3-4.5 years

(inside leg 42-51cm)

Max Weight: 50 kg
Weight of bike: 3.75kg
Wheel/Tyre Size: 14" x 2.5"
Seat Adjustment: 39cm-49cm
Handlebar Height: 55cm

Available at: www.earlyrider.com



## STRIDER 16 SPORT £150 (inc. P&P)



Strider are a leader in the balance bike market, producing a range of three bikes serving cyclists from three months to adult. They also organise coaching and racing on balance bikes. We looked at their mid-point 16" wheel size, suitable for 6-12 year-olds. My coaching has made me realise that there is a large number of children of this age group who still haven't learnt to ride. Unlike the previous models reviewed, this has both front and back breaks. At this stage brakes are required, good speeds can be reached and the skill of braking needs to be learnt prior to riding a pedal bike. Footrests can be fitted onto the bike when the user has started to coast, to allow feet to be tucked up out the way.





Child Age: 6-12 years

(inside leg 49-65cm)

Max Weight: 85kg
Weight of bike: 7.9kg
Wheel Size: 16"
Seat Height: 49-65cm

Handlebar Height: designed for long and short reach

Available at: www.striderbike.co.uk

## **ISLA BIKES CNOC 14** £250



I see a great deal of youth cycling and racing, both road and MTB, and Isla bikes are a definite favourite. They are made with children's physiology in mind; for example the reach on the brake handles and small diameter handlebars suit smaller hands. This is a delightful little starter bike, so our choice for a first pedal bike. It rides like an adult bike with scaled-down components and being light weight makes learning confidence-inspiring and safe. It is also interesting to note that Isla bikes fetch a good price used, so if there's no sibling to hand it onto it can be sold.

**Child Age:** 3-4.5/5 (inside leg 38-48cm)

Max Weight: 24kg Weight of bike: 5.79kg

Handlebar

Wheel Size: 14" (comes in 16")

Frame Size: 8" (comes in 9" too)

Seat Adjustment: 8" (comes in 9" too)
(Seat tube measurement)

both vertical and reach adjustable to give

adjustment: wide range

Available at: www.islabikes.co.uk

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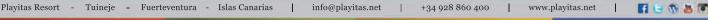
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It is strong and is capable of being towed over rough terrain. It's class leading carrying capacity of up to 400kg is very impressive and all access is through the large back door and secured on the built in tie-downs.

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But there is no skimping on luxury; teak flooring, leather lined, heating and air conditioning are all standard as is the toilet and shower-room, built in alarm and infotainment system.

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# CYCLING BOARDGAME REVIEW

Christmas wouldn't be complete without a boardgame. Kari Ward has found just the one for cyclists

### **Leader 1 Hell of the North**

Available from: www.ghenosgames.com £33 inc. postage to Europe

ou have cycled all week, watched and re-watched your favourite tour videos, gone to the pub and talked cycling to your mates, squeezed into your latest bit of lycra and secretly admired yourself in the mirror but you still haven't had your fix of cycling; where can you turn to next? Surprisingly maybe, the answer is a rather good cycling boardgame, Leader 1, Hell of the North.

Leader 1, Hell of the North (HOTN) follows on from the Leader 1 base game, but is a standalone game and is generally recognised as being a slight improvement. We assembled a group of gamers, cyclists and a cyclist-gamer to road-test (O.K. table test) the game. Whenever you have a game that attempts to recreate something in particular, there are two key questions; how well does it represent its chosen theme and second, is it a good game?

The game starts with you deciding on a course which you can make up with a number of the hexagonal tiles included in the game. Overall the game is colourful

and robust and professionally produced, although those with thicker fingers (or more alcohol in them) will find themselves knocking over the pieces fairly frequently. In similar games you might expect to find a "scenario" booklet which would show you how to lay out some real-life courses, although this could be fun to research yourself, and there are some suggestions online. (http://www.boardgamegeek.com/thread/1270895/)

There are four types of track (flat, rises, climbs and downhill), three types of cyclist with the choice of one of three specialities and understanding how these relate to each other will help with winning the game. The game is one of energy management and deciding when, based on your abilities and the course, to break away, just like in real cycling. You begin the game in the peloton, choosing either front or back and you can quite happily stay there, conserving energy until one of you decides to make a break-away.

Once there is a break-away the game really hots up (and takes longer to go through the turns) and decisions become crucial. There are simple rules for slipstreaming and blocking and the cyclists in our group were very excited how well the game reflected the decision making and drama of real-life competitive cycling. From a

games design point of view players need to feel they have a chance of winning until the very end and also that their decisions count and HOTN offers both of these. It has both strategic and tactical facets to it and the gamers in the group were

surprised to see such a good game based

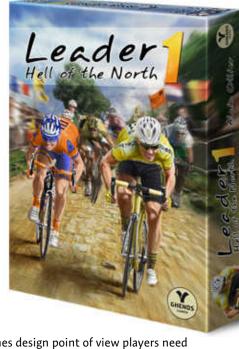
on cycling.

You don't need to be a hard core gamer to enjoy HOTN and while the suggested age minimum on the box was fourteen, with the right support twelve-year-olds, or precocious ten-year-olds could get to grips with the game. However, there is a caveat and that is the rules. Not the rules of the game, which overall are very good, but how they are presented. They are a translation and while the translation was far from perfect, the fundamental flaw is the way in which they were laid out. We were lucky in that we had experienced gamers in the group and were able to persist in working them out. I am not sure non-gamers, except the most determined, could persevere to interpret the rules. It would help massively if one person was familiar to explain it to the others. Online help is also available.

Overall a surprisingly good game that very accurately reflects the genre and offers replayability and flexibility. However, get someone to interpret the rules for you, or trial run it just to get used to the game before playing it with friends. A reference sheet with energy costs is included but should also have a list of the handful or so of other key rules that are important but hard to look up in the rule booklet.

Cycling boardgames have a long history. For an excellent website of past and present see: http://www.cyclingboardgames.net





## TOUR DE FRANCE XBOX ONE GAME 2015

## By Helen Hill and her boys aged 14 and 12

his is the latest edition and came out, as always, shortly after the TDF. Unfortunately this time they didn't make a version for Xbox 360. The initial trailer advertising the game is high quality and is narrated by Ned Boulting, giving the impression that he might be commentating on the game. However this is not the case. The voiceover and commentary are not good as they sound very stilted and artificial. As the game loads the music is similar to the well-known ITV4 theme tune.

There are all the teams present that were in the actual TDF except for BMC, for some reason, plus there is a team of cycling legends once you get to a higher standard.

In this latest edition the graphics have been improved, with added realism features. For example there are plenty of crowds lining the route. In the 2014 version the riders could go for 5/10 km without any crowds at all. While racing it really does feel as if you are in amongst the peloton giving a real feeling of being part of it.

There are three modes – normal mode – where you ride each stage of the tour as any rider you want.

Challenge mode is where you do descents and achieve Gold, Silver and Bronze medals and pro team mode is where you have to have two climbers, two sprinters, two punchers and three domestiques. A stage takes approximately half an hour and the whole tour can take up to 12 hours.

There are some new features in the 2015 edition, notably levels of difficulty. Amateur is for beginners or players who do not want too much of a challenge; professional is for players who know a bit about cycling and champion is reserved for players who know the tactics of cycling and want a big challenge. Additionally there is the race day condition feature which is improving the condition of the rider by 10% and also improved behaviour feature where sprinters are better organised in their lead out trains.

In addition two extra races, the Criterium International and the Criterium du Dauphainais, have been added to the game. These have three stages and eight stages respectively.

Suggestions for future editions would be that they include team cars at the back and riders get to speak to the team manager. They could also add roundabouts to make it more realistic.

## CONS

Lag when the riders stop pedalling or when the game stops working for no apparent reason and has to be rebooted to get it working again. Unrealistic voice over.





We recommend this game: hours of fun engrossed in the Tour De France. So this could be the ideal present for the man, woman or child in your life who loves cycling but also enjoys playing on the Xbox too.

## PROS

Better graphics than in previous editions, realistic sprints, ability to buy legendary cyclists, when you buy a rider in pro team they are only in your team and not their actual team as well.





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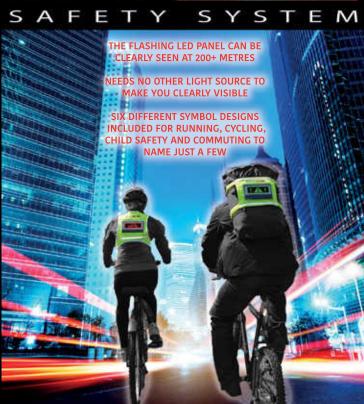
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# ARE YOU A CYCLIST? OR DO YOU JUST LOVE CYCLING?

by VeloVixen

iven that you're leafing through Cycling World, you'd have thought the answer was obvious. Wouldn't you?

But are you a Cyclist (capital 'C') or just a cyclist? And how do you distinguish anyway? Or do you, like us, feel increasingly frustrated to be labeled at all? Perhaps – heaven forbid – you just love to ride your bike.

We live in an age in which the mass media loves to categorise, pigeon-hole and reduce. And it's only one step from there to broader stigmatisation. Pick up a broadsheet or tabloid, or switch on a radio chat show or news piece covering cycling and you'll find arguments over riding a bike that are so polarised it may as well be bull fighting or capital punishment being debated.

Inevitably, there's a grain of merit in both extremes of these arguments. No question, some 'extreme' cycling fundamentalists can be overly forthright (and very visible) in their behaviour on the roads. Equally, there is a distinct group in society who are quite clear that 'cyclists' should be eradicated from existence. And moved out of their way when they want to get through. And pay 'road' tax.

Both of these groupings can veer between aggressively unpleasant and downright dangerous to others. Neither of them do their more moderate brethren any favours. Sadly, they are disproportionately vocal.

The point is this: almost everyone in society is somewhere in the middle

of the 'Cyclists' / 'Other Road Users' Venn diagram. How many dyed-in-the-wool car drivers do you know who have never felt that simple joy of riding a bike? And how many passionate cyclists can honestly say they don't see the advantages and comforts of motorised vehicles? Most people do a bit of both.

No doubt the pushbike hating tabloid columnist arguing for road tax and bike licencing once shrieked with glee when their stabilisers first came off. And







the world would stop revolving if the internal combustion engine vanished overnight.

Can't the moderate pragmatists amongst us rise above all this aggro? Well, not really. At the moment, the 'cyclist' tag ensures that climbing on your bike changes you – in the eyes of plenty - from a nurse or a student or a lawyer or a mother or a politician into part of an amorphous lump of dehumanized obstacles.

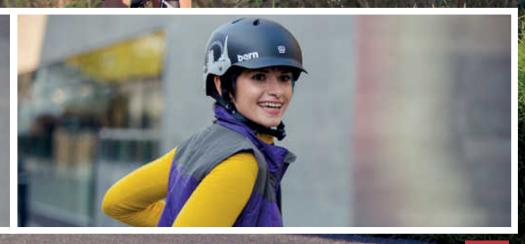
And that gets in the way of people doing it.It can make those

who cycle already feel wary and victimised.

It's only when the activity of riding your bike becomes normal – be it as a passionate club rider or a commuter or a gentle weekend pottered—that potential new bike riders will stop feeling judged and intimidated and start joining the merry band of us lot who simply love to ride our bikes. That Utopia won't

happen overnight, but less use of the divisive 'Cyclist' tag in the media would help.
Just think, then you'd be able to read Cycling World without worrying about who's watching!





# Tour of Indian bike factories and The Taj Mahal

AT TIME OF WRITING WE HAVE SIX BOOKINGS CONFIRMED PREVIOUSLY WE HAVE LEFT IT LATE NOTIFYING
PEOPLE RESULTING IN DISAPPOINTMENT FOR SOME

IF INTERESTED, CONTACT US ASAP LAST BOOKING DATE - MID-MARCH 2016

## <u>Indul</u>

## The Itingrary 2016



DAY MINUS -1: Mon 25th April 2016 - Depart Heathrow evening - 21:00hrs or near.

I hope to get all bookings in good time to get every-one on Jet Airways. Their baggage allowance of 46 kilos each way it will enable people to bring masses back with them. Take note of the classic bike!

**DAY 1:** Tue 26th April - Arrive Delhi and to Hotel Clarks Inn. Afternoon - drive round India Gate and houses of Indian parliament. We will take you to an office where you will get a higher exchange rate for your money.

DAY 2: Wed 27th April. Visit Atlas Cycles, Sahibabad, Utter Pradesh. Evening free

**DAY 3:** Thur 28th April. Visit The Taj Mahal. This is a full and fascinating day. Travel by mini-bus. Guide in attendance.

DAY 4: Fri 29th April. Visit Atlas Cycles, Sonepat, Haryana. Evening free

**DAY 5:** Sat 30th April. Connaught Circle, centre of Delhi for shopping, or what-ever. Lunch at The Embassy Restaurant. Visit Chandi Chowk market. Just got to show you the 'bike repair' shops. Masses to see and buy. Fascinating and amusing. Visit the amazing and beautiful Akshardam Temple.

**DAY 6:** Sun 1st May. Depart Hotel at around 10:00hrs India time, for home. Arrive London Heathrow 17:30hrs UK time.

TRAVEL DATES: It works out perfectly if we fly out on night of Mon 25th April (arriving 10:30hrs India time) Tue 26th April and return Sun 1st May, arriving Heathrow 17:30hrs UK time.

**COSTS: £880** Want to stay a few more days? Easily arranged for little extra cost We need a deposit of £250 per person, the remainder six weeks before departure.

COSTS COVERED: Flight, hotel (B&B) and all transport and entrance fee costs. I can save sufficient from this to pay for the meal at The Yellow Chilli (close to Clarks Inn) on the first evening. Food is excellent and despite quality of food, not expensive. NOTE: Single room supplement will be an extra £80

## INDIAN FACTORY TOUR

Monday 25th April to 1st May 2016

## **BRING BACK A CLASSIC!**

Atlas Cycles manufacture two million, per year, of the bikes you see below.

I have negotiated a sale for you, if you want one, to purchase at £75.00.

We were selling these at £265.00 in the early 1990's and sold a total of 250 around the UK in a year. Available in gents as shown in the photo below or ladies loop (1920's style). They will be well packed ready for transport by air and can be carried on Jet Airways at no extra cost. A small deposit will be required to confirm the order, recognising Atlas will be boxing them up solely for us. We will collect them the day before departure.

Baggage allowance is 46 kilos and I was able to bring two back in May 2015 free of cost. One box will be half your allowance.

Coming as a couple? - buy one of each - ladies and gents. That will still leave you a lot of allowance left to buy other goods... Curtains, bedclothes, cameras, quality jewellery and many other items. Quality is excellent but surprisingly cheap.

Atlas Cycles (Haryana Ltd). Goldline model Factories at Sahibabad, Utter Pradesh and Sonepat, Haryana.







For full itinerary and details contact: Alf@webbline.co.uk

Telephone: 01406 371273



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## WINGMAN BACKPACK: CYCLING SUITS YOU £135

enty, the makers, say this is for those who "walk, cycle or fly to work or exercise before, during or after work." Personally I've always left a suit at my workplace but there's no accounting for how complex people's lives can get, especially for those who regularly fly to work. So if you do need to commute with smart clothes on your back, that you don't want to get creased, The Wingman Backpack is definitely for you. And if you do need to fly it is accepted on budget airlines as carrying luggage.

The Wingman is designed to transport business suits, dresses, shirts, Ipads and accessories with the convenience and comfort of a backpack. It has semi-rigid vertical ribs (made from 100 per cent recycled plastic) which restricts the diameter of the suit bag when rolled, minimising garment creases which you get in traditional foldin-half suit bags. The Wingman comes with a gym / accessories bag and can be used together or separately. This wraps inside the suit bag and is secured by buckles. It is large enough to carry shoes, toiletries and a towel. It also has a foldable hanger, the head of which slots through the outside of the bag. There is also an outside pocket large enough to carry a tablet and a pocket with a waterproof cover.

The Wingman was created by Australian sports enthusiasts Jeremy Grey and John

Gourlay, who were frustrated by the lack of products available to cyclists for

transporting business clothing and garments. It is certainly useful- I can see myself using it for my next bikethemed wedding.

### **Product spec:**

Wingman Weight: 1.7kgs.

Wingman Size: Rolled – 56 x 22 x 25cm. Unrolled – 56 x 101cm. Gym/Utility Bag 0.4kgs, 50 x 19cm cylinder; 14 litres

Capacity: x1 suit (jacket and trousers/ skirt) + x1 shirt/blouse, or x3 shirts/ blouses.

# THE PROGRAM THE NEW ARMSTRONG FILM

By Jeremy Henderson, a director and editor of corporate films who loves film and likes cycling when he can summon the energy. Photos from Canal Studios

ance Armstrong - a hero, a cheat, a winner, a loser? Beating cancer is one thing but for a one-day racer to become a grand tour contender? That is one step too far for the journalist David Walsh, on whose book, Seven Deadly Sins, this film is based.

Thirty minutes in we are on the 1999 Tour de France. Johan Bruyneel, the team manager, instructs Lance to go for it and we see him accelerating uphill, slicing through the field. It is exhilarating and as we cut to the press tent the journalists are suddenly caught by the moment and the enormity of the Armstrong attack. Walsh however, played by Chris O'Dowd, stares at the screen, mouth open, disbelief in his eyes. It is an engaging scene as are many of the sequences in this film and yet I left the cinema feeling somewhat shortchanged, realising that I had seen some exhilarating footage as well as determined performances, but had learnt almost precisely nothing.

Ben foster as Armstrong has some great moments and at times his facial twitches capture the one-time hero in an uncanny way. We are allowed to witness his attempts to practice the line, "I've never tested positive for performance enhancing drugs" in his bathroom mirror in what feels like a strange homage to De Niro's famous scene in Taxi Driver. When at a book signing a fan thanks him so sincerely for his example Foster shows Armstrong visibly struggling with the deception of his own narrative.

But for the most part the film simply drives on desperately ticking-off the critical moments in a story that is frantically crammed into 104 minutes. It is nonetheless an entertaining movie that has worked hard at set pieces. Some of the racing is visceral, whether riding over the cobblestones in rain or approaching surging corners in the Alps. Original footage blends well and the riding always feels authentic and exciting. But there is also the other story to tell, that of Walsh's determination to unveil the superstar as a cheat. Here the film is less convincing and although O'Dowd is a believable character the Sunday Times scenes are thin. The doping doctor, Michele Ferrari, is little more than a pantomime villain and although Jesse Plemons is very watchable playing the teammate of Armstrong, Floyd Landis, his morality tale is less than convincing.

Stephen Frears directs and claims to have known nothing about cycling or Armstrong before this project. Assuming most of the audience might have seen the news in recent years then the danger is that nothing much is added to this sorry tale whereas those who know little of the details may struggle to appreciate the impact of several characters.

This is a decent watch that any cycling enthusiast will struggle to resist but the plot points insist that we keep driving relentlessly forward leaving us breathlessly entertained and none the wiser





Director: Stephen Frears

Running Time; 104 minutes

Certificate: 15

On general release from October 2015



# Q AND A WITH DAVID WALSH Text from Studio Canal

## WHAT WAS YOUR IMPRESSION OF LANCE WHEN YOU FIRST MET HIM?

DW: It was on the 1993 Tour. He was hugely impressive and I liked him. He was charismatic and brash, he absolutely knew what he wanted. I knew this guy was going to leave his mark on the Tour de France. I didn't think he could ever win because everything on his record said he was not really a top climber or time-trialist. But the one day races, Lance was going to be the man for them. And most of all he had this will to succeed.

## WHAT ABOUT LANCE MADE YOU BELIEVE THAT HE WAS NOT DESTINED TO WIN THE TOUR?

DW: Physiologically he didn't look like a guy who was ever going to be a great climber. His upper body was too big and there was nothing in his record that said that he would be good enough to win the Tour in terms of all those long climbs in the Alps and the Pyrenees

## IN FLECHE-WALLONNE LANCE IS OUTPACED BY THE GEWISS TEAM. WHY IS THAT A SIGNIFICANT MOMENT?

DW: Late in 1993 he became the third youngest guy to win the World Championship. He really rode superbly well and he became this superstar. In Fleche-Wallonne, a one day classic that should have suited Lance really well, three guys from the team being coached/medicated by Dr Michele Ferrari break away and finish first, second and third and Lance thinks this isn't right - these guys didn't do that without the assistance of the drug that was the rage at the time, EPO. By 1995 Lance and his team mates are using EPO.

HOW DID THIS NEW DRUG EPO, ALONG WITH BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS, WORK IN A DIFFERENT WAY FROM PREVIOUS PERFORMANCE ENHANCING DRUGS?

DW: These new drugs don't enable a man to the get the best out of himself, they create a new man. When you go up a mountain your weight is terribly important - the lighter you are the more effective you will be on the climb. Some boys are born too big to be great mountain climbers. EPO can transform them, they can stay the size they are while EPO generates the production of red blood cells which will give them a supply of oxygen, and then the fact that you are big and strong is an advantage.

## WHAT WAS YOUR REACTION TO LANCE'S COMEBACK IN 1999, AFTER BEATING CANCER, SUPPORTED BY DR FERRARI?

DW: Lance to all intents and purposes has been reborn. That race started at Puy de Fou; Lance blasted everybody. It was an ominous performance. Then we came to the mountains and the first stage was to Sestriere. Lance had ridden it four times but we'd never seen him in the lead group in the mountains. On that day to Sestriere not only did he ride with the big guys but at the end he rode away from them and won on his own. I was in the press room that day. There were eyes being raised to heaven and people shaking their heads. So you started to look at Lance closer and closer.

What ratio in the press room were believers versus non-believers?

DW: I'd say 60% blindly believed and 40% had real doubts. Now out of those 40%, 36% were happy to suppress those doubts. If you read their copy, it looked like they believed in Lance. If you spoke to them honestly and intimately, they would tell you they didn't really believe him. I used to rail against that at the time. I'd say you can express your scepticism. And they would say, and get sued? And have Lance put me in his black book and have me blacklisted? And having no access to the team? Everyone wants a Lance interview so journalists were trying to protect themselves. By protecting themselves in that way, in my view, some of

them were knowingly propagating a myth.

## OTHERS WHO SPOKE OUT AGAINST LANCE WERE THOROUGHLY VILIFIED BY HIM DURING THE ENSUING INVESTIGATIONS.

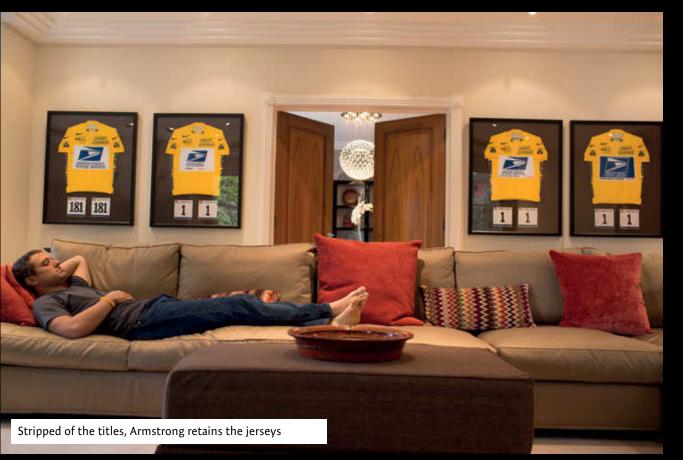
DW: It was brutal, brutal the way that Lance tried to crush everybody that got in his way. To call Emma O'Reilly a whore was truly despicable. To dismiss Betsy Andreu as a crazed bitch was so wrong, so unfair. He made an illusion to Stephen Swart's family which was just awful. He called Greg LeMond a drunk. It was so beyond the pale. Everybody who was involved in this story, adversaries of Lance, they would all say that the doping was bad, but not nearly as bad as the bullying.

## WRITING THE BOOK BECAME A PERSONAL STORY. HOW DID IT FEEL TO BE PORTRAYED ON THE BIG SCREEN?

DW: It's really surreal. All through this story I was clinging on to the Marge Simpson mantra that there is no shame in being a pariah! There were times when I felt like the outsider; the black sheep. To now have myself portrayed in a more favourable way is an incredible turnaround and it's hugely flattering.

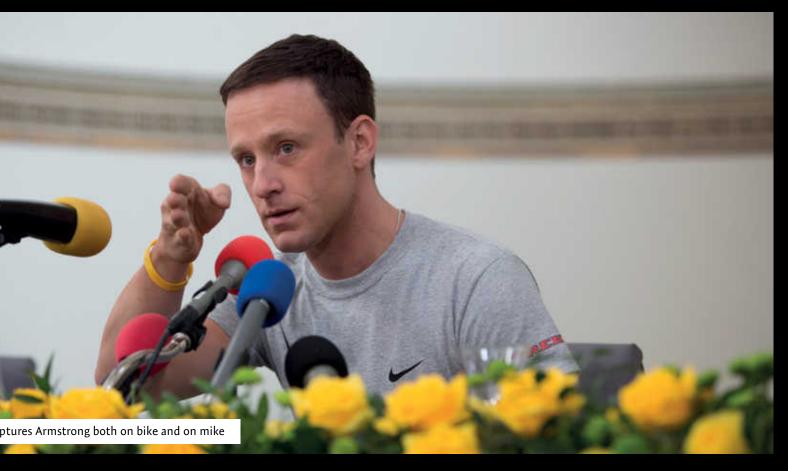
## AND WHAT DO YOU HOPE THAT THE FILM OF THE PROGRAM WILL BRING TO THIS EVER UNFOLDING STORY?

DW: I think we're going to get a sense of Lance the winner, Lance the ruthless crusher of people that got in his way. It's important that people see the character that lay at the core of what US Anti-Doping chief executive Travis Tygart said is the greatest doping conspiracy that we've ever seen. People must understand the nature of the guy who masterminded that.



















# THE HISTORY OF THE MODERN BIKE

**REVIEW BY RICHARD PEPLOE** 

was not sure what to expect from this book as the use of the word 'biography' puzzled me, but the introduction from Chris Boardman explains it well: "In this book I've tried to tell the story of the bike, [and] how it has developed over time. This is the biography of the bike; its birth, its development, its present and its future".

The association with respected journalist Chris Sidwells makes for a highly experienced team, but in trying to cover the history of the bicycle they have set themselves a challenging goal: it is a goal that has been tackled in various ways over the years, but this one has the advantage of being the most up to date (for now) - and it seems to have access to more and better images than most.

One criticism of such 'complete' books is often that the list of topics covered does not match with your own idea of what is important. However, the position here is that the range of topics covered is very comprehensive, but the coverage of each is necessarily brief. For example, the development of multiple-gear systems is covered in six pages, whereas books of this length have been written about derailleur gears alone: my view is that whilst you might not be getting the most detailed writing on any topic, what you do get is informative and well-illustrated.

In covering the development of the bicycle virtually every style seems to get a mention: alongside the more mainstream types, tandems, trikes, HPVs, folding, and cargo bikes are also represented. From what I can tell only unicyclists and bicycle polo players are ignored.

There are numerous individuals who played an important role in a key part of the bicycle's development, and it is good to see how many of them get a mention, whether it be our own Geoff Apps, Andrew Ritchie, and Mike Burrows - or from further afield Gary Fisher, Tullio

Campagnolo, and Boone Lennon.

In its quest to be complete the book covers the history of all the components that go to making up a bike. Taking the two pages on pedals as one example, the development of toe-clips, toe-straps, and cleats is covered, alongside the introduction of so-called 'clipless' pedals – which had actually been patented in 1895, confirming the old adage that not all inventions are genuinely new. Things are brought right up to date with coverage of power measuring pedals, which is an area that is seeing rapid development at present.

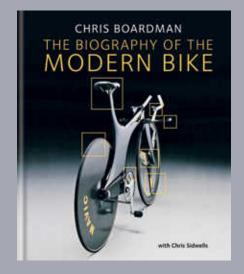
Taking advantage of Boardman's involvement in the cycle industry there are a few pages on how a bike gets from the drawing board to production, and then what goes on in the Asian factories where most of them are produced.

In Boardman's introduction he says that he also wants the book "to show how bikes have made a difference to the world we live in", which increases the scope of his challenge further: fashion, the state of the roads, and the emancipation of women have all been influenced by cycling and are mentioned - but again whole books have been written about those topics alone, so coverage is brief.

These days Boardman is becoming better known for his enthusiasm about "bikes made for transport" than for his sporting achievements – and so it is that his vision for the future is as much about "Bicycle Utopia" as it is for the latest developments in aerodynamics, although he still has plenty to say on the latter.

This book covers a lot of ground successfully, but treat it as an informative introduction to its many topics rather than the comprehensive reference book on any subject.

## **Book Review**



**Author:** Chris Boardman with

Publisher: Cassell Illustrated

Date: June 2015 Format: Hardback

Pages: 288 ISBN: 9781844037834

Price: £25









## WORLD PRESS CYCLING CHAMPIONSHIP



## OUDENAARDE • BELGIUM 2015

...ok I'm guilty of seeking dramatic effect as it's only the World Press Cycling Championships, but I'm still suffering from pre-race nerves. Or is that the effect a full English on a mildly turbulent ferry crossing? I'm heading to Oudenaarde, epicentre of the Flemish Ardennes, the host of this year's event and a chance for us desk-bound media bods to get in the saddle for three days on the trot, and then try and claim it all on expenses. A piece on iconic cobbled climbs, memorable moments of bygone Tours of Flanders and Flandrien cycling heroes should wing it with the publisher.

Thankfully the event organisers have given us all of the above on a plate: the

King of the Koppenberg Challenge on day one does the job alone. Two further days add a 23km time trial with mid-point climb and a five-lap, 72km, road race with cobbled sections. With organised tours and free museum tickets I wonder if there'll be any time to drink bear and eat chips.



## MY FIRST BIKE RACE

# WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN FLANDERS

Cycling World Editor enters his first bike race, opting for the World Championships.

By David Robert

Images by David Robert, Martin Paldan of Grib Grab and Elke Lannoo

## Pre-race preparation

The first piece of preparation was getting the Cycling World race jersey made. This process started early on a Saturday morning using my young son's coloured pencils, whilst he scribbled on his own jersey template beside me. I opted for the colours of our current black and yellow logo on a seventies design as

the magazine began as a newspaper in the late seventies. The design is the Raleigh TI shirt worn by the likes of Hennie Kuiper, World Road Race Champion of 1975. Fittingly the shirt was made by NicoSport, the factory being situated just a few kilometres south of Oudenaarde near Brakel, and well worth the visit.











## Interview with Pete Murphy, NicoSport's UK Rep

#### Ed

Please tell us a bit about Nico Sport's history.

#### PM

Well NicoSport was started by Nico Lapage and his wife Paula in 1957. Nico was Cycling Champion of Belgium in 1956 but being a clever Flandrian wanted to make provision for himself and his family for after his racing days were over. At the start Nico just made cycling caps but as the years went on he ventured into all types of apparel starting with knitted fabric then moving on to lycra and then the heat transfer garments. Nico kept on racing for a while and in 1963 rode with the team of Rik van Looy, taking part in many great races.

## Ed Tell me about the staff of the factory.







#### PM

Well most of the workers come from the surrounding villages and being a family concern Nico's wife, two daughters, son-in-law and grandson all pay a major part in the production.

#### Ed

Are there good links with the professional peloton?

#### PM

NicoSport have supplied many pro and sponsored teams, for example they have for the past thirty years made the jerseys for the Six Days of Flanders (Ghent). Laurenzo Lapage, Nico's son, started racing as a junior and then became a great Six Day rider. After his racing days had passed he became Director at U S Postal, Discovery Channel, Astana and Rock Racing and for the past three years has been Director Sportif with Orica Green Edge. The link to the pros enables Laurenzo to keep the factory up-to-date with the latest cutting edge ideas for cycling apparel.

Pete Murphy has worked as UK rep for NicoSport for the past thirty-eight years. To order cycling apparel contact: vipimurphy@btopenworld.com or 01304 368700.



A loan bike from Raleigh came thirty-six hours before I was due to get on the ferry. The orange Militis needed to be put together from flat pack, adjusted, test-ridden on one remaining commute to work, then readjusted; so I was cutting it fine. I was up late on a Tuesday night getting the bike ready for the commute the morning. I pumped the tyres up to a lowish PSI of 90, thinking this is what I'd be riding on the cobbles. I went to bed pleased with the evening's preparations only to be woken at 2am by what sounded like a gunshot. Going downstairs, a wide-eyed cat with fur standing on end confirmed my worst suspicions. An inner had blown, forcing the tyre off the rim. At least the carbon wheel hadn't buckled, which has happened to aluminium equivalents in the same test. I was re-awoken at 4am to a repeat performance by the other wheel.

The cat had now left in disgust and I had to get up a mere two hours later for tyre and inner tube changes. Fortunately this was nearly the end of technical issues with the 2016 Raleigh Militis, which proved to be a great ride.



## Raleigh Militis Race 2016 £2,400.00

## Specifications

Brakes	SRAM Force
Cassette	SRAM 1170 11-26 cassette
Cranks	SRAM Force 22 53/39 chainset
Fork	Raleigh C6 carbon
Frame Material	Carbon Evolution
Tyres	25mm Schwalbe One (alteration)
Handlebar	RSP
Saddle	Fizik Ardea
Seatpost	RSP Carbon
Shifters	SRAM Force 22

The outstanding feature of the bike was the handling. I found the steep, cobbled descents could be taken with confidence as I felt the bike planted to the road. It inspired confidence allowing me to corner faster and brake less. It is the bike used by the Raleigh race ream so has an aggressive geometry: mixing a short (994mm) wheelbase with classic racing

7.1kg

**RSP** 

Weight

Wheelset

Stem

angles (73.5° head and 73° seat) and a short 170mm head tube. Direction changes were swift and response to pedalling efforts was instant and rewarding. At this level of bike one presumes decent shoes and pedals are being used. This is a necessity to avoid heal clipping on noticeably widely-spaced chainstays. In short: a pleasure to ride.

Cole C27 Lite, Tubless ready.



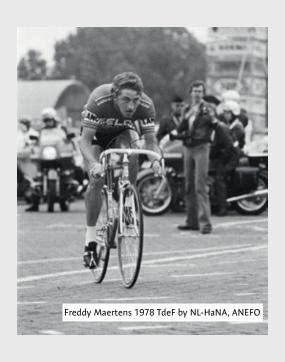
he event got underway with a drawn out, evening opening ceremony in the Town Hall of Oudenaarde. Carbon race bikes, including German sprinter Greipel's Green Jersey Ridley, seemed oddly at ease in a stone chapel boasting some fine stained-glass windows. The evening was a variety show of local dignitaries, members of the Belgian Cycling Federation,

a world champion skipping team, pasta and local beers. And of course, Flandrien cycling heroes. Freddy Maertens and Johan Museeuw would be rolled out at various point during the evening and poor old Freddy at every opportunity over the next three days. The price you pay for fame and being a patron of the local cycling museum, acting as event HQ.

## Flandrien Heroes Freddy Maertens

Freddy Maertens (born 13
February 1952) a Belgian professional racing cyclist who was twice World Road Race Champion ('76 and '81). Winner Vuelta a Espana in '77. 1977 Tour of Flanders: Maertens, racing in the rainbow jersey of world champion made an illegal bike change at the foot of the Koppenberg and then dragged Roger de Vlaeminck the remaining

70kms to a win having been told he couldn't receive first place himself. Maertens claimed discussions of payment took place between the two riders and he was not pulled from the race to keep it exciting for TV. Maertens didn't contest the sprint finish, knowing he was to be disqualified and keeping his side of a deal. Maertens later tested positive for the race.



The Tour of Flanders Museum houses cobblestones with the name of each year's winners. 1977 shows the race was won by Roger De Vlaeminck, but sitting

above is second cobblestone, that reads "Moral Winner Freddy Maertens," no doubt due to his position of museum curator.

# Flandrien Heroes Johan Museeuw



Johan Museeuw (born 13 October 1965) a Belgian professional racing cyclist known as The Lion of Flanders. He was a professional from 1988 to 2004 and was particularly successful in the Monuments winning the Tour of Flanders '93, '95, '98 and Paris-Roubaix '96, 2000, '02. He won the World Championships in

1996.

In August of this year the Lion resigned as Quick Step-Innergetic's PR Manager when confessing to "not being 100 per cent honest" during the final year of his cycling career, in what is generally being interpreted as an admission to doping.

### Day 1- King and Queen of the Koppenberg

am concerned that the bike gearing is not low enough for the Koppenberg's maximum gradient of 22% so I skip the guided tour of the city for a reconnaissance mission. You can't see the severity from the start, but I've been before and struggled with much lower gearing. I know better than to try this without a warm up so I find a nearby climb and awaken the relevant muscles. My first attempt is made intentionally near to the edge so any side tumble as grinding momentum is lost will end up on a grassy bank. That's precisely where I find myself just as the cobbled-killer hits its most severe. I roll down cautiously and try again. The second attempt, though peppered with fatigue of the previous, is much better. Standing up, grinding out a ridiculously slow cadence of 35 in the lowest gear whilst taking a serpentine route when it hits 22%, pushes me on through to the slightly less steep section and onto the end at the levelling top. Job done- I know I can ride this berg, as the

locals call their cobbled climbs, as long as it doesn't rain. Rain will scupper everything- wet, slippery cobbles would make standing up in the pedals impossible as there would be no traction on the back wheel. And I can't ride it sitting down as I just don't have the power with this gearing. This whole Flandrien challenge is worryingly Flandrien weather dependant.

The day is punctuated by large groups of school children crossing the city. I am intrigued as they ride past, smiling through their bike bell cacophony. The mystery is solved as I stumble across a group of primary kids out on the street in front of their school, just behind HQ. Pupils, teachers, cones and a bouncy castle take up the closed road as youngsters enjoy scooting and cycling. All because, as a young teacher informs me, it is Strapdag.

## Iconic cobbled climbs and memorable moments of bygone Tours of Flanders

### The Koppenberg

Average gradient: 11.6% Max Gradient: 22%

Length: 600m

Part of the Tour of Flanders since 1976, it is the steepest climb to be included in the race

1987: Danish Rider Jesper Skibby was leading, but fell. Following him was the race director's car which drove over his bike, the rider only being saved, allegedly, by spectators dragging him out the way. However there is no evidence of this in the photo.

2006: Italian Alessandro Ballan had a mechanical and had to run up the hill, passing riders as he went. Struggling to get back in the pedals he lost the advantage but then went on to win.



### Strapdag KBO School

Friday 18 September is Strapdag, the national walk and cycle to school day in Belgium. Throughout the day I saw large groups of young people traversing the city on bikes. I visited KBO School for three to eleven-year-olds where street closure had brought the school community out for cycling, scooting, skateboarding and walking activities. I met school Director, Nancy Van Der Straeten and teacher, Sylvie Vermeulen.

### Editor (Ed):

What is strapdag?

### Ed:

Is today about training young people?

### Nancy

This is one day in Belgium about walking and cycling to school in a safe way. Not by car, but by walking or cycling. The safety is very important.

### Nancy

Yes. Today we have the police to teach children how they must behave on the road.

### Fd

What different means of transport can we see here today?

### Nancy

We see scooters, we see the gogo roller, we see bikes and also walking.

### Sylvie

It is also the national day in the whole of Belgium for every school. We have many schools learning about safety and the way of behaving in the traffic. That's each year, one day that we especially work with little children about behaving in the traffic which is sometimes horrible for a child.

### Ed

Do many parents bring their children to school using these more active means of transport?

### Nancy

They are trying to bring the children with the special visible jackets to the school but there are not too many and we want more.



Today was special because we all walked from a distance to the school, but other days it's mainly with the car. It's normally only 10% like this. It's a problem in the whole of Belgium as the traffic is very dangerous for a child and we want them to behave sensibly and carefully in the traffic.

You both seem very passionate about this



### Nancy

Sylvie is also in a special group of the school who come with the children through the traffic because she has a son who died in the traffic and from that day onwards she and her husband do very important things for little children in the traffic. (Tears well up in Sylvie's eyes).

t's a very moving and a wonderful thing you

Would you like your UK school community to adopt more active and sustainable transport? For resources, national incentives and even some officer support see Sustrans' School Programme.

www.sustrans.org.uk/our-services/what-wedo/getting-young-people-active#schools

### Day 1- King and Queen of the Koppenberg

he afternoon guided bus tour of the Flemish Ardennes is wasted on me. I spend the entire journey drifting in and out of slumber surprisingly exhausted from a mere one and a half cobbled ascents. In the brief pockets of consciousness, I can only stare at the sky, studying the varying shades of grey that threaten a good downpour of cobble-sheening rain.

The afternoon has passed without a drop from the sky and some encouraging out-breaks of sun. So when I turn up at the starting parade the other thirty-odd riders are equally optimistic. We leave Oudenaarde city centre escorted to the foot of the Koppenberg in a parade led by Eddie Merckx's orange Volvo 244 DL, branded by sponsors Molteni and Campagnolo. What honour! The booming of euro-rock-pop greets us well before we arrive at the traditional race party at the foot of the Koppenberg. The police road block lets us through to a micro Tour of Flanders scene: beer flowing from a trailer bar with hovering portly gentlemen; kids on bikes testing the lower slopes; an inflatable Red Bull arch at the start, and a flatbed full of speakers vomiting outa constant soundtrack. The event starts at 5pm; I am due to go at 5.43 so I wait to warm up, staring at an ever-impending sky. Pre-race nerves demands a toilet visit, the inconvenient type, and thankfully a local resident takes pity on me. A few minutes later when I leave her house, it is spitting and at 5.23 the harassed clouds empty their greyness onto our racetrack. I feel ruined- there is no way I can cycle up the berg. After a moment of despairing panic I devise a plan which I run by the only other British rider, Julian, editor of a shipping publication. Although unconventional he agrees it is the best plan under the circumstances, no doubt content in the fact his choice of gearing permits him just to ride and not adopt such measures. The rain lessens, I warm up and take to the start line. The start is a mere 5.8% and a smooth gutter even allows you to avoid the cobbles. The gutter continues as the gradient hits 12 then 14%, but ends once the gradient hits 16%. I move onto the cobbles, try to power through but can already feel the back wheel losing traction. Now is the time for a controlled dismount before a random fall. Many a rider has dismounted, even in the Tour of Flanders, but I also remove my shoes to allow a good run up this berg with the bike on my shoulder. The shoes, with enormous Look cleats, are a godsend when married to pedals but ice-skates when separated. I tactically discard them in the direction of a spectator so they can be reclaimed and start to stride up the slopes to the applause and cheers of a substantial group of onlookers. As the slope hits the acclaimed 22% my lungs are burning in a way they have never done when cycling and the short stint of running has reduced to a painful trot. Cameras are clicking, mainly the photographer of the event kit sponsor who provided the socks I am wearing. A great opportunity to catch the pair in action as the new whiteness rapidly turns to mud brown. Tired of running I try to remount, but still no traction, so off again for some more footwork until the flattening out allows a remount and pedalling without shoes to hit the finish line actually cycling. The Red Bull girls' (Red Heifers?) customary congratulations are curtailed with "where are your shoes?" Having regained a chink of breath I explain, and then refuse both the statutory offer of nauseous jitters

in a can and generous offer of finding my shoes; the former on the grounds of not wishing to vomit, the latter to do with a cyclist's pride. Once down the slope my shoes are returned to me, but I do not reshod myself as I plan to stay and encourage other riders. I am a little beyond the start of the steepest section and I see numerous other riders forced to put a foot down, unable to restart and thus having to dismount. It happens to so many riders and I find myself running down the slope, still in soaking, dirty socks, encouraging them to run through the steep section where after I'd help them remount with a push. The problem is each unsaddled rider thinks they are only one to have failed and are overcome by the desire to give up. I shout "Don't worry, everyone's come off here, run, you'll still in a race!" I stop short of suggesting the removal of shoes, and most attempt a trot in inappropriate footwear. All gratefully accept a push to allow them to clip back in the pedals and cycle off as the gradient lessens. So I stay, having found a role to play. A few impressively powerful riders cycle through the whole ordeal, and I bellow out my admiration. I haven't had so much fun off a bike, in my socks, for years.

### **Day 2- Individual Time Trial**

he morning begins with a reconnaissance of the following day's race circuit with ex-Tour of Flanders winner Johan Museeuw. The 13km lap seems well within my capability; I have ridden all of its little Flandrien gems on previous visits: climbing the Volkegemberg (a mere 6.8%); 1050m of cobbles at Holleweg and Ruiterstraat; the fast, cobbled decent of the Katterberg (6.3%). I've ridden these cobbles well before, attacking them hard, riding the crown and not gripping the handle bars too tightly. As we near the end of the course I turn to the rider next to me and comment that it will be fine as long as it stays dry. Right on queue there is a short, sharp downpour.

A few of us carry on and ride the afternoon's TT course. A 24 km flat jaunt with a mid-point climb halfway up the Oude Kwaremount (4%). Still quite technical with a few sharp turns, but I don't vocalise my now-mantra-like "all right if no rain" and tempt meteorological fate. I am happy with my TT ride. I am pretty cautious on the sharp turns, climb well and ignore the faster riders whistling past me despite the minute intervals between starts. I am used to being overtaken by riders aged twelve to eighty-three when time trialling in the UK. I am placed twenty out of twenty-two in M2 (those born between 1956 and 1970), 44m37s, average speed 30.93km/h. Winning M2 Julian Gray (the other UK rider) 35m16s, average speed 39.12km/h. Winning woman Mady Kleeven of the Netherlands. 39m46s, average speed of 34.70 km/h







The event does not pass by without some controversy. The rules stated normal bikes only, no time trial bikes or accessories. Almost all of us interpreted this as TT helmets not being permitted, but the winner of the men's twenty-one to forty-five aged race wore a TT helmet and the commissaires allowed it as they had interpreted "accessories" as being only bike accessories. I also overheard a suspicious comment about a rider who was mediocre in previous years, but unbelievably improved this year. Such drama. Just before the award ceremony, featuring Freddie Maertens again, riders were offered a free massage from a tall, Norwegian Mario Chippilinni look-alike. In fact it could well have been the Italian sprinter knowing the organisers propensity to roll out a celebrity at any opportunity.



### WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN FLANDERS

### **Day 3- Road Race**

espite being my first ever road race, I remain calm; thinking of it as a fast sportive around Flanders on a welcomed sunny day with no rain forecast! After a neutralised first 3 km the race, as expected, rips apart with a ridiculously fast ascent of the Volkegemberg. Riders disappear never to be seen again, even the final group remains teasingly unreachable for the remainder of the race. I am left at the back with about ten stragglers, and we create our own exciting race within, no behind, a race, all not wanting to finish last. We split into pairs and threes, working together to catch lone riders ahead. Different allegiances form, then riders drop off, but as I am one of the lightest of the race-rear-riders I climb comparatively well and move up through the scattered stragglers. Sometimes I am recaught by strong riders on the flat, even overtaken by their weighty descents, but I restate dominance when the road goes up. I cannot shake off a big Russian on the second lap but he misjudges a ninety degree turn and ends up in someone's front driveway. I recall Tommy Voeckler doing the very same thing in the 2011 Tour De France, on a decent from Sestrieres to Vila Peros. The funniest random thoughts go through your racing mind, is it due to all the blood going to your legs? I remember a conversation I had with Julian, the only other UK rider who won yesterday's time trial, about how great we thought Tim Krabbe's book The Rider is preciously because it addresses the fact that so many random thoughts go through your mind when you're cycling flat out, which is precisely what is going on now... I am brought back to race by a decent that needs some concentration. I am alone for a while until I am joined by a Belgian called Paternoster, who I thought I had shaken off earlier. The names stick in your mind if you stick to their wheel as they are printed on the race numbers pinned to their backs. Paternoster is dispatched on an ascent, and the Italian Fulloni is caught. He was riding full-oni (Krabbe's book also talks about word invention during racing) and I struggle to stay on his wheel on the fast flats but once again ease past as the road hits yet another climb of the Volkegemberg.

The race is starting to get messy as the under-forty five riders, who set off a bit before, are lapping us just as another race, with the woman and over 60s men doing two laps, appears on the course. The mixture must be meaningless to spectators who cheer anyway, enjoying a chance to drink beer on the roadside. I welcome the presence of the over 60s, fresh pairs of veteran legs powering wheels to jump on, as the women prove too fast to catch. I am rolling well, squeezing frequent gels down my throat and starting to catch and overtake riders dropping off the back group of my M2 race. I am nowhere near the back now, gaining a respectable place and wondering, as I approach the start of the final lap if I can hold the pace and catch more riders or if I'll burn out and get caught by the old adversaries behind. Just as I approach the start of final climb of the Volcanoberg, there is a race-ending incident. I am prevented from making the turn by a race marshal ushering me onto the final section to the finishing line. I hold up my hand with splaying fingers, shouting "Cinquieme tour," to which he replies "race kaput!" By the cheers and applause that I am receiving I realise that I have been inadvertently thrown onto the front of the race, the faster riders at the front

completing the five laps and approaching the run home. I sit up, feeling a fraud if I was to speed to the end taking adulation having not even completed the race. I can hear the tannoy announcing the name of Julian at the precise moment he comes rocketing past, neck and neck with an Italian. He says something about "five laps," moving too fast to decipher though I know what he means all too well. I am still being cheered, even urged on by the crowds who want to see me contest the sprint or at least race to maintain my third place. I feel uncomfortable and downbeat: I haven't completed my race, will never know how well or badly I'd have fared on the last lap all while I am receiving unmerited appreciation. I rip the race number off my back, sit up still further and roll to the finish line. I actually stop before the line and explain the situation to the chief commissaire.



He urges me cross the line and in a bizarre reversal of the King of the Koppenberg I find myself dismounting and pushing my bike over the line, not wanting to ride over. It is a bizarre end to my first race though the disappointment soon gives way to the commonly-held philosophical positon of "that's bike racing." I feel for the commissaires who have the unmanageable task of untangling four strands of races melting into one onto the sun-softened tarmac. I feel grateful to the countless volunteer marshals who have given me safe passage through the numerous potentially accident-laden road crossings. It is great to be part of a mini-world championships in the run up to the real UCI World Championships. It is not dissimilar: whispers around an incredibly improved performance; ambiguous interpretations of race rules; chaos for race officials amongst adrenaline-rushed riders. And the camaraderie of the peloton; the vibrant competitiveness of racing followed by analysis and incidents, tales of cobbles and bergs, rehydration and replenishment.

It would be a couple of days later that I stumble on the results hidden somewhere in Facebook. Apparently in the 45-60 year-old race I placed 28th out of 42 with an average speed of 32.94km/h, surprisingly faster than my time trial ride. Not sure how trustworthy the results are but I did notice I finished five seconds before Fulloni and nearly seven minutes ahead of Paternoster. It's all about winning your own race; and taking part of course.

# CYCLING THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK FOR PALESTINIAN MEDICAL PROJECTS

### **By Rohan Talbot**

s tensions escalate across the West Bank and East Jerusalem, an intrepid group of British cyclists have just returned from a five-day, 200km cycling challenge across the territory in support of UK charity Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP).

The cyclists met tragedy early on when one of the cyclists, Steve Onyett, sadly passed away of a suspected heart attack on the first day. In accordance with the wishes of his partner, also on the trip, the cyclists completed their journey, raising over £108,000 for MAP's healthcare projects in the West Bank, Gaza and Lebanon. Tributes have flooded in for Steve since the news broke, and donations from well-wishers have more doubled the target he set on his fundraising page.

The cyclists' route took them from Nablus through the divided city of Hebron and to historic East Jerusalem. On the way, they passed the 428km Separation Wall, and visited MAP's mobile clinic serving the threatened Bedouin communities of the Jordan Valley.

The diverse group, many of them visiting Palestine for the first time, included several doctors and a

72-year-old retiree. Despite the gruelling physical challenge they have undertaken, some of the cyclists have vowed to embark on another ride in future.

Chris Taylor, one of the cyclists, said: "Doing this ride with MAP we raised a lot of money and awareness, but we also received a lot back as well. We came back fitter and with a compassion to help other people - something that maybe has got lost along the way with the structure of working life back here in the UK."

Tain Joliffe, another of the cyclists, said: "I feel privileged to have been part of this challenge. It has inspired me to fight even harder for Palestine and its people."

Jo O'Neill, MAP Director of Fundraising and Marketing who also undertook the challenge, said: "Though this trip met tragedy and sadness on the first day, we are exceptionally grateful for the contribution that Steve, and all the cyclists and their supporters, have made to MAP's work. The money they worked so hard to raise will help us make a vital difference to the lives of some of the region's most vulnerable people."

### **Steve Onyett**

It was with great sadness that MAP announced the death of Steve Onyett, one of the participants in the first ever "Cycle Palestine" ride. Steve died of a suspected heart attack on the first day of the event which took thirty-four participants on a route across the West Bank.

Steve joined the group with his partner Emily, signing up before her in a show of enthusiasm. In the short time he was with the MAP Cycle Palestine group, Steve quickly bonded with other members of the team. He won their affections and they have all related their memories of their encounters with him.

Emily has left a touching tribute on the fundraising page he set up for MAP ahead of the trip. She writes of his mood ahead of the ride. Steve had been "very happy, healthy and brimming with his usual gusto for life." Tributes to Steve and expressions of sympathy have been coming in from MAP supporters who have been touched by the news of his death. People have also been leaving donations and tributes on his page, which has far exceeded the £2,500 target he had initially set. Virgin Money Giving have kindly offered to waive their fees for funds raised through the site, and Hashim Shawa, Chairman of the Bank of Palestine and friend of fellow rider Matthew Eyre, has also offered to match these donations.

The thoughts of all Cycling World staff are with his family and friends at this tragic time.

Contribute to fundraising: http://www.map-uk.org/supporters-stories/inmemory-steveaonyett













# CHASING THE SUNSHINE CYCLING IN MALLORCA WITH SUNVELO

unVelo are leaders in cycling holidays and training camps based in the north of Mallorca in Playa de Muro, a thriving cycling community in the spring and autumn seasons giving the area the name of "Mallorca's bike mile". SunVelo, one of the few ABTA member cycling businesses that offer full financial security for holiday bookings, use two adjacent premium 4 star resort style hotels situated within 200 meters of the popular Playa de Muro beach and back onto the stunning S'Albufera nature reserve. All rooms have a spacious apartment style layout and the vast buffet breakfast and dinner at the hotel restaurants will never leave you going hungry, catering for all diets and tastes.



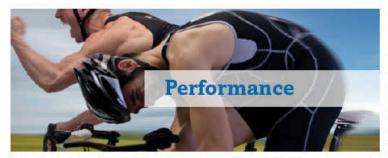
SunVelo prides itself on focusing on an individual's cycling objectives, offering a variety of different daily expert-led guided rides for all levels of cyclist from novice to serious competitive racer. Alastair Irvine; multiple Commonwealth Games medallist and former professional racer heads the riding programme with an expert team - all of which are either qualified cycling coaches or CTC/Skyride nationally certified group ride leaders that have vast knowledge of group cycling and the little-known roads and routes on the island. You have the opportunity and flexibility to pick any level of group you want to ride with on any day depending on how you feel or the route you prefer to tackle. Most that come out to ride with SunVelo enjoy the convenience of hiring a full carbon bike for the duration of their stay, that are available onsite with full bike set up and professional mechanic support. So there's no need to go through the hassle and cost of flying out your own.

Most cyclists stay for the week, running weekend to weekend, however flexible arrival and departure packages are available with a minimum four-night stay, arriving and departing on any day. While there are numerous options available for cycling in Mallorca, SunVelo is one company that seems to be getting it right with a good mix of perfect location, quality hotels and expert ride leaders. All levels of groups have equal priority and importance and SunVelo is





# SunVelo Mallorca Ride Groups







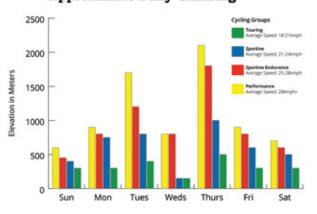


not just focusing on those wanting to train for events or a racing season; a "touring cyclist" gets as much attention and support as someone preparing to ride the Etape. This seems to be echoed by the loyal SunVelo customer base, many of whom return year after year and in the company's 2015 feedback survey results; 100% of those that completed the survey stated they are happy to recommend SunVelo to friends and fellow cyclists.

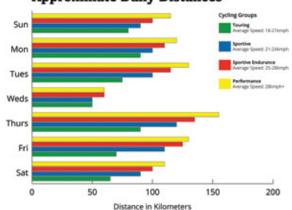
SunVelo is supported by sister company Sunsport Coaching that provides a sports lab set up for full metabolic fitness assessment and VO2 max testing. As well as offering full spring and autumn seasons, SunVelo also acts as the leading UK tour operator for the popular Mallorca 312 and 167 sportives taking place on the last weekend of April each year.

For more information about SunVelo holidays and training camps in Mallorca email: enquiries@sunvelo.com or view information on their website: www.sunvelo.com

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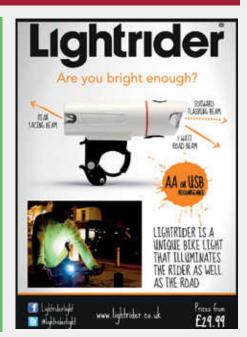




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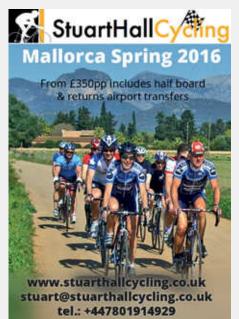
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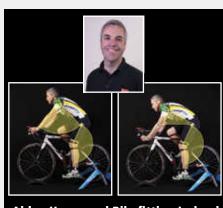
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